

AMERICA

A CATHOLIC REVIEW OF THE WEEK

NOVEMBER 27, 1937

WHO'S WHO

WILLIAM HILDRUP McCLELLAN, S.J., for fifteen years has served on the faculty of Woodstock College, Md., as an amazing savant who lectures on Old Testament Exegesis, Biblical Hebrew and the Semitic Languages. Nevertheless, he is freshly of the new times and new testament. After completing his studies in a Friends School, a Presbyterian Academy and a General Protestant Seminary, he functioned as an Episcopalian clergyman. He and a famous group found their Anglican position untenable in 1908, and he accepted complete Catholicism. A year later he entered the Society of Jesus, where he was happy ever after. . . . THEOPHILUS LEWIS, Negro journalist, has already won recognition among Catholic readers by his excellent dramatic column, *Plays and a Point of View*, in the *Interracial Review*. His "view" on drama, literature and most other things is very close to that of the Catholic Church, to which he does not belong. Intimate with the literati of upper and lower Manhattan, he deserts them for his happiest hours with his wife and children in a quiet summer nook on Nantucket Island. . . . MAURICE C. FIELDS, also a Negro and young, favorably compares with the youngish veterans who share the page with him this week: THEODORE MAYNARD and FATHER FEENEY, among the generals in the poetic parade, SISTER ST. VIRGINIA and FATHER BARRETT, among the rapidly advancing junior officers. . . . ROBERT A. GRAHAM sends his article from San Jose, Calif., where he presides over classes in the Bellarmine College Preparatory. He notes in a covering letter that his sources are "exclusively Communist." . . . THOMAS J. FITZMORRIS, our cinema evaluator, leaps out of his column for a comment on a general worry.

THIS WEEK

COMMENT	170
GENERAL ARTICLES	
Organized Labor and Organized Politicians Paul L. Blakely	172
Lincoln and Davis at School.....P. L. B.	173
Popular Front Party Enters the Political Arena Robert A. Graham	174
American Bible Scholars Organize for New Advance.....William H. McClellan	176
Hollywood Biography.....Thomas J. Fitzmorris	177
WITH SCRIP AND STAFF... John LaFarge	179
EDITORIALS	180
Vanishing Homes . . . Senate K. K. K. . . . Labor Conferences . . . Let the People Decide . . . The President's Message . . . Spanish Relief . . . Advent.	
CHRONICLE	183
CORRESPONDENCE	185
LITERATURE AND ART	
The False Start of Negro Fiction Theophilus Lewis	186
POETRY	188
The Child.....Theodore Maynard	
LinenAlfred Barrett	
Prayer on Looking Down Sister Mary St. Virginia	
Ceramic Nocturne.....Maurice C. Fields	
I Never Could.....Henry Watts	
The Spanish "Loyalists".....Leonard Feeney	
BOOKS	189
The Diary of a Country Priest....Alfred Barrett	
Sorrow Built a Bridge.....Francis X. Connolly	
Christ, Color and Communism....John LaFarge	
THEATRE.....Elizabeth Jordan	191
FILMS.....Thomas J. Fitzmorris	192
EVENTS.....The Parader	192

Editor-in-Chief: FRANCIS X. TALBOT.

Associate Editors: PAUL L. BLAKELY, JOHN LAFARGE, GERARD DONNELLY,
JOHN A. TOOMEY, LEONARD FEENEY, WILLIAM J. BENN, ALBERT I. WHELAN.

Editorial Office: 329 W. 108TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY.

Business Manager: FRANCIS P. LEBUFFE.

Business Office: 53 PARK PLACE, NEW YORK CITY.

AMERICA. Published weekly by The America Press, 53 Park Place, New York, N. Y., November 27, 1937, Vol. LVIII, No. 8, Whole No. 1468. Telephone Barclay 7-8993. Cable Address: Cathreview. United States, 10 cents a copy; yearly \$4.00; Canada, \$4.50; Europe, \$5.00. Entered as second-class matter, April 15, 1909, at the Post Office at New York, under Act of March 3, 1879. AMERICA, a Catholic Review of the Week, U. S. Pat. Off.

COMMENT

CALL it recession, if you will, or depression, the fact of the matter is that the country is in a business slump that is alarming enough to cause an extra wrinkle even on the brow of our genial President. Plainly something must be done during the present session of Congress. It may have been—and there are indications that this is the case—that certain acts of the Legislature enacted in haste as emergency measures are not so sound economically for a period when normalcy must be established. It is willingly conceded that the engine had to be primed in order to get it started, but once on the way the sooner it is left to its regular mechanical process the better. Congress would do well to look into some of the enactments of the previous four years and ascertain whether or not some of its provisions are not acting as the check upon growth of business and the extension of employment. There is no use in killing the goose that lays the golden egg, and throttled industry causes a decline in capital investment. A progressive industry used to be considered the backbone of prosperity, and it is hardly believable that the idea is out of date.

— — —

THE PROBLEM created by economic and social factors as well as an outline of the attempts at solution are presented in *Shall Marriage Be Subsidized*, a November article in *Harpers*. Dowries or allowances by parents; a share-and-share-alike agreement between husband and wife, with the latter working outside the home; some form of premium or subsidy, whether private or public—all are examined and their inadequacy shown. A more radical and revolutionary solution of the problem is quoted from Dr. Henry Pratt Fairchild, professor of sociology at New York University: "The problem cannot be taken up piece-meal. It must be treated as an aspect of a social and economic system which needs revising so that it can meet the demands of the changed world in which we are living." The more permanent solution may well call for an even more revolutionary solution. For according to our way of thinking—and many can be found to think with us—the social and economic system itself needs overhauling and "the changed world" would with profit retrace its steps on many of its social and economic views. There is not a consideration given religion in the whole study, and the high standard of living assumed as a principle might socially and economically need a revamping. The blatant contempt for Divine law predicated by birth prevention is another element that precludes any effective man-made amelioration. Dr. Fairchild in his attempted solution calls for "a correct attitude towards marriage by which it is seen not as a purely biological factor but as equally sociolog-

ical, and a collectivized economy in which jobs adapted to their abilities are available for all." That, as he says, can only come through a complete reorganization of society. Shades of Moscow and Stalin! Are Christ and His teaching to capitulate to Marx and class warfare?

— — —

FROM highly authoritative sources, warnings as to the gravity of the rural problem in America were uttered at the fifteenth convention of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, held in Richmond, Va., November 7-10 just past. "In the present worldwide disorder," said the Most Rev. Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, Papal Delegate to the United States, "brought about by the abuses of capitalism, by technological changes, and by dislocating relationships between rural and urban life, dangerous inequalities and disproportions have developed to the detriment and, in some places, to the degradation of the farm population. Those who live on the land form the larger proportion of the human family and their labor is the most important and indispensable for the livelihood of all." Monsignor Fulton Sheen, of the Catholic University of America, declared that "the greatest defense of democracy is a faith in a personal God and the wide distribution of private property." Capitalists, he claimed, must be prepared to make sacrifices. Farmer and capitalist alike must learn that the primary purpose of business is consumption, not profit. "The whole industrial philosophy of the past hundred years is wrong." The two great challenges to democracy are "the material concept of life and the development of the proletarian spirit—the terrific increase in the number of wage earners." The Catholic Rural Life specializes in the answer to this challenge in terms of the Catholic agrarian program. The variety and practicality of the program was strikingly illustrated by many able addresses given at the Richmond meeting.

— — —

DETAILS of the trial of Father Rupert Mayer, S.J., in Munich on July 22, 1937, have recently come to light. Thirty persons squeezed into the tiny courtroom to see Father Mayer indicted on the technical charge of treason, under the law of December 20, 1934. The trial lasted seven hours, and was characterized from start to finish by the utmost courtesy on the part of the judge and prosecution, and a corresponding good humor and priestly dignity on the part of Father Mayer, who calmly declared that he would and could never swerve from the principle to give to God what was God's. The nine witnesses who were called to testify as to the "seditious" character of Father Mayer's sermons were vague and even contradictory in their state-

ments, somewhat like the witnesses in a famous trial that took place in Jerusalem nineteen centuries ago. The attorneys for the defense profited by the occasion to tell the real story of Father Mayer's heroic life, his courage on the battlefield, his love for country and fearless championship of the truth. They told how he had even had his clerical coat torn from his back and been spat upon by the angry mobs as he spoke against Communism at a public meeting. To save his own and the Nazi Government's face, the judge sentenced Father Mayer to six months' imprisonment but at once suspended the sentence. Father Mayer returned to his religious community, having left an imperishable record as a man who would face death rather than prove untrue to God and his vocation.

SAM BARON, American Socialist who went to Leftist Spain to investigate the fate of certain members of the P. O. U. M., is at last free. Baron's investigations in Barcelona and Valencia brought down on him the resentment of the factions at present in control and caused his imprisonment. Writing from Paris since his release, Mr. Baron paints a picture of conditions among the Reds that must be disheartening to say the least, to Communist sympathizers in America. Overwhelming distrust of the "Prieto Communist coalition" Government, dissatisfaction over the enforced retirement of Largo Caballero, intense "dislike of the reign of terror" created by the secret police, informers and spies of the Communist Cheka, "arbitrary censorship for the political advantage of those in control," failure to gain any victory during the entire Civil War, and the unpopular removal of the seat of government to Barcelona as involving serious political complications are some of the indictments that he makes of the present Government. There is no need for further comment. We have known that such a Soviet-guided state of affairs existed in Leftist Spain. To have it so brutally confirmed by a sympathizer of the cause should tear the blinds from American eyes that have any sight left.

SPEAKING at a lecture in Cork on "The Population Problem" under the auspices of the University Extension Lectures course, Professor Busted gave added weight to a sociological principle that has been asserted more than once, yet needs rehearsing in the face of the progressive crusading of eugenists. The problem, which should be alarming and ominous, of the speeding decline of birth rates throughout the States is looked at by some of our shortsighted and eye-to-pure-strain propagandists with little or no concern. Their hopeful attitude seems to be fostered by the consideration that the falling off principally affects the lower and inferior portion of the race. Now no country has survived with world influence that concentrated on one section of its population. Reports coming in from the Boards of Education in our cities reveal a drop in the primary schools of 1,500

pupils in cities of about 350,000 population. Regretting that Ireland which had before the famine one of the highest marriage rates in Europe, had sunk so low, he asserted that a marked decline in births was sure to upset the equilibrium of the economic order. "Some commentators," he said, "rejoice at the reduction of population, but there is not a single country in the world where a reduction in population has brought about relief in unemployment, eliminated war or reduced poverty. On the contrary, countries that have increased in population have also increased their standard of living." Declining birth-rate solves no problem; it is an augury of national collapse.

FIVE cardinals will be added to the Sacred College during December. The number will thus be brought up to sixty-nine, one less than the traditional and canonical total of six Cardinal Bishops, fifty Cardinal Priests and fourteen Cardinal Deacons. In his usual vigorous and forthright manner, His Holiness has named prelates who richly deserve the sacred distinction of being his official counselors. Of notable interest to us is the elevation of Most Rev. Arthur Hinsley, Archbishop of Westminster. Gossip had inferred that certain utterances by the Cardinal-elect had been received with a frown by the Vatican. The naming of His Lordship by the Pope completely dissipates this chatter. The addition of one French Archbishop and three Italian Archbishops preserves the balance of thirty non-Italian and thirty-nine Italian Cardinals, more than half of the latter being in charge of Congregational functions.

RUSSIA has again acknowledged defeat in the international councils of diplomacy. Previously, it had made futile attempts to block the work of the Non-Intervention Committee on Spain that has been wrangling in London for many months. Russia was intransigent, non-yielding, valiant. But the Stalinite Government, some few weeks back, had to hang itself on the one or the other prong of a dilemma that meant everything for its future participation in European affairs. Either it had to submit to the desires of Great Britain and France who felt themselves forced to conciliate Germany and Italy, or else it had to cut its ties with the London-Paris axis. The latter meant European isolation; the former implied basic concessions. To save its position, Russia agreed, most amazingly, to grant belligerent rights to General Franco and the Nationalists. The agreement, of course, means nothing in view of all the military aid that Russia is still pouring into Communist Spain. Moreover, Russia negatives its agreement by a threat of further obstruction when the question of the meaning of "substantial withdrawals" of foreign volunteers from Spain comes before the Non-Intervention Committee. For the present, Russia is whirled along with the London-Paris axis and, however humiliating its position, finds salvation by yielding to the solicitations of capitalistic Britain and bourgeoisie France.

ORGANIZED LABOR AND ORGANIZED POLITICIANS

Divorce may follow their union

PAUL L. BLAKELY, S.J.

SOME time ago I was presented to an Ancient who in his ninety-fifth year retained all his wits and most of his teeth. The teeth I took on credit; as to his wits I perceived them to be keen as we discussed Senator Wagner's repeated efforts "to clarify" Section 7a of the old National Recovery Act. It had been the proud boast of the Ancient's father (born in 1782) that he had seen George Washington, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson and Governor Morris, and that with the familiarity which an older man will sometimes accord a younger one, he had known the redoubtable Alexander Hamilton.

But he had an even prouder recollection. As a struggling young lawyer in an industrial town, he had seen the virtual wage-slavery of his neighbors in the transition period when the old relation of master and apprentice was being replaced by the factory system. Sympathizing with them, he had given his services gratis to a poverty-stricken group of hat-makers who were trying to form a union, and for his counsel had been jailed. In those early days any attempt by wage-earners to unite for the purpose of securing better pay brought upon the organizers the guilt and penalties of "conspiracy."

It seems almost incredible, but men still living can remember the time when many of our courts practically held that certain sections of the population were set aside to minister to their richer neighbors. In the mill-towns of New England and in the grimy tenements of New York and Philadelphia, Southern defenders of "the institution" found what was in many respects a replica of that chattel slavery which the extremists in the North were determined to destroy, even if with it they also destroyed the Union.

"We live in different times, and in some ways they are better," commented my Ancient. "They are better for the wage-earner, at least in promise. They will be better in fact if labor can get leaders who think of the worker first, last and all the time, and keep out of partisan politics. It was politics that caused trouble for unions from the very start. Once a man begins to run for office or even to mix with politicians, he is bound to meet with folks smarter than he is. They will promise all that he asks for labor, and maybe when they promise they

intend to keep their word. But partisan politics, as I see it, is a series of compromises, and when there is question of the party—and that generally is the first question—labor is left out in the cold. That may not be the labor leader's fault, but the men are apt to think that it is; or else they conclude that he is not smart enough, and a movement starts to oust him."

I do not quote my old friend in the belief that his views are wholly correct. But it does seem to me that they merit careful consideration, especially today when labor legislation, actual and prospective, takes in common talk the place that Prohibition held ten years ago. I think it would be foolish to deny that labor has made tremendous gains in the last few years. It has made these gains not only through legislation, Federal and State, but also through an accession of public favor. In fact, without that favor the legislation would not have been enacted. And it would be absurd to deny that today labor owes its legislative position very largely to the support of the leaders in the Democratic party.

Probably labor, as an organized body, thinks that this is the time to press its advantage. But signs of dissent among labor leaders are becoming painfully apparent, particularly among those whose affiliations are with the A. F. of L. I know it is the mode to cite John Frey and Matthew Woll as prime specimens of the reactionary mind, but when these men point to the possibility of control or abolition of the union when the Government's plans begin to function, the hint is worth considering.

It may be suggested, moreover, that what a party grants for political motives, a party can take away for the same motives. Like the Government, no party gives anything gratis. A return is expected, and when the time comes, is demanded. Yet it is certain that labor must continue to press for its rights through legislation, and that means through compacts with political leaders. Right there is the danger for organized labor. How can it be safely averted?

Not easily under all circumstances, but if it is to be avoided or minimized, one thing is absolutely necessary. Labor must select as leaders those men only upon whose integrity and good sense it can rely. The ward politician (and every union has one)

the firebrand, the racketeer, the agitator who in denouncing the iniquity of unchecked capitalism unwittingly blasts the foundation upon which the very rights he demands for labor must rest, the radical who has drifted in from the Communist camp, must be firmly repressed. Tub-thumping at a local meeting releases pent-up resentment, perhaps releases it in most instances harmlessly enough, but beyond that point its value is *nil*. And it may easily precipitate a riot.

Unfortunately, labor leaders, actual or in ambition, do not take criticism easily. Usually their first reaction is to accuse the critic of hostility to organized labor.

That labor organizers should be sensitive is understandable in view of the years of oppression. Yet over-sensitiveness places them in an undesirable position, it seems to me, since it dims their vision of what is actually happening about them. Every man who earnestly works for a good cause is apt to become a wishful thinker. The mood is deepened when those immediately about him share his enthusiasm. Yet surely that leader courts disaster who cannot brook criticism of his plans or forces, and who believes that proclamations of what he intends to do can make up for intensive, intelligent planning to do what it is plainly necessary for him to do.

Now it ought to be obvious that no man is a friend to organized labor who holds his peace when in his judgment the leaders act on policies which will harm organized labor. This Review has fought for the rights of labor since its foundation, and it yields to none in its desire to promote them, in the spirit of the Papal Encyclicals, by every means in its power. Yet when writing in these pages I held, rightly or wrongly as the case may be, that the sit-down strikes in the automobile industry, and the defiance of the courts exhibited by labor leaders at Flint were seriously imperiling labor's case with the public, I was accused of "bigoted and ignorant hostility to organized labor."

Again, on various occasions AMERICA has criticized statements made by John L. Lewis. For this rashness it has been accused of a dire plot to scuttle the C.I.O. The facts in the case are that from the outset AMERICA has approved the C.I.O. set-up, an approval which it has never withdrawn. Personally, I am willing to follow Mr. Lewis when I think he is right, but I do not propose to greet him with loud huzzas when I think he is leading labor backward.

Perhaps out of the travail of the last few years and, more immediately, out of the quarrels of the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O. some man who holds the confidence of all the labor factions and of the public, and who can look the politician in the eye and not lose his head, will emerge. It is not labor's cause alone that is at stake, but the cause of all of us, for we are members one of another. We cannot afford to forget that there can be no true or lasting prosperity unless labor, freeing itself from the snares of politicians and self-seekers within its ranks and beyond them, takes its proper place in society.

LINCOLN AND DAVIS AT SCHOOL

MORE than a decade ago I traced a story about Zachariah Riney, whose chief claim to fame is that he was Lincoln's first teacher. It had always been known that Riney was a Catholic, but what I doubted was the statement, first published by Ida Tarbell, I believe, in her life of Lincoln, that he later became a Trappist monk and died in the monastery at Gethsemani, in Kentucky. The research was, of course, of no real importance, but it interested me, and finally, through information kindly furnished me by the Rev. Frederic M. Dunne, O.C.S.O., now Abbot at Gethsemani, I was able to show that while Riney had lived in the monastery for some years and had died there, he was never a member of the Community. (AMERICA, February 13, 1926.)

It is not so well known, however, that the first real school attended by Jefferson Davis was staffed by Catholic teachers. This was the College of St. Thomas founded by the Dominican Friars at Springfield, Ky., about 1812. The Confederate statesman always recalled the Friars with great affection, and Father O'Daniel, O.P., in his life of Bishop Miles, tells how on meeting one of them years after, Mr. Davis knelt for a blessing. The lad was only eight when he entered the school, and but ten when he left it; hence he not unnaturally fell into some errors of fact in his reminiscences, one being that the Friars were enormously wealthy!

In his recently published *Jefferson Davis, the Unreal and the Real*, a masterly biography which will dispel many calumnies about the Southern leader, Robert McElroy unfortunately gives new currency to the fable of the wealthy Friars. He envisages this pioneer school as conducted "in connection with an agricultural estate, stocked with blooded cattle, and worked by slaves." This environment, he asserts, "in no wise destroyed the belief" of young Davis that slavery was "an institution ordained of God." I have read a good deal about the early Dominicans in Kentucky, and have heard much from tradition, but this is the first picture I have seen of the impressionable young Davis watching the Dominican slaves at work on the Dominican "agricultural estate." The truth of the matter is that the Friars were miserably poor, and poor men did not own slaves and "blooded cattle."

A happier picture is that of Jefferson Davis, *aet.* 9, begging Father Thomas Wilson, O.P. to admit him into the Church. Davis himself gives us the materials in an account dictated in his old age. He went to Father Wilson's room, and although this Friar was the head of a rich "agricultural estate," he was partaking, Davis recalled, "of a frugal meal," to-wit, bread and cheese. He listened to the boy, and at the first pause in the pleadings "handed me a biscuit and a bit of cheese, and told me that for the present I had better take some Catholic food."

McElroy thinks it necessary to repeat that "no attempt was made to proselyte" the lad—which shows that he does not know Catholic schools. No such attempt is ever made.

P. L. B.

POPULAR FRONT PARTY ENTERS THE POLITICAL ARENA

Americanism hypocritically mixed with Bolshevism

ROBERT A. GRAHAM, S.J.

THE SEPARATION of labor from capital used to be provided by a steel fence. Advanced technique, however, is creating a more intangible but more inclusive line of demarcation. If the American Communist party has anything to say about it, class-consciousness will be carried into politics.

The first public move in this direction was the call for a national Farmer-Labor party by Earl Browder in a speech delivered in Washington before the National Congress for Social and Unemployment Insurance in January, 1935. Not any kind of a Farmer-Labor party would do. No development of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor party, that "appendage to existing bourgeois parties," still less, any LaFollette progressivism was wanted, but a real Popular Front party, anti-Fascist and anti-Capitalist, "built from below, on a predominantly trade-union basis, including all mass organizations of the workers . . . putting forward a program of demands closely connected with the class struggle, strikes, unemployment and so on, with the leading role being played by the militant elements, including the Communists."

Two years of intensive propaganda (featured especially by the vigorous appeal of Francis J. Gorman of the United Textile Workers before the fifty-fifth Convention of the A. F. of L.) gave negative results.

The characteristic Communist mobility proved itself in a recent caucus of the "Popular Front Party" leaders held last June, when the semi-annual Plenum of the C.P.U.S.A. gracefully retreated from its position under a barrage of Marxian terminology and circumlocutory statements. You will hear less of a Farmer-Labor party for a time. But the old apparatus of the Popular Front, which made the streets of Paris unsafe for pedestrians, is still with us.

There is no question of the Third International giving over its Popular Front policy. Word for that must come from Stalin himself. And any anti-Popular Front symptoms developed by individual Communists, will call down upon those hapless dissidents all the adjectives that Stalinists specially reserve for Trotskyite disruptionists. The Communist party has no intention of abandoning its plans for an anti-Fascist and anti-Capitalist party for America. It

has no intention of letting what it considers the raw material for Communism, the farmers, workers, middle-class shop owners and professional men (ninety per cent of the population, according to Strachey) go without leadership, or go over to Fascism. It has merely recast its concept of what the practical application of the Popular Front tactics means for the United States.

The reason for the abrupt shift and the new line of approach is found in political developments of recent months. Any Popular Front party, whatever its name, is not and cannot be a pure product of Communism. Communists enter the existing movement and give it direction along their own lines of thought. The Communist party, being a minority group, must wait for the tide of opportunity to rise. It is seen, therefore, that a Popular Front program requires the cooperation of organized labor. It requires unanimity among groups often at variance, the best example being the Socialists and Communists themselves. It supposes an already existing mass-movement towards a third party. In 1935 it was commonly thought that the time was ripe for the call.

But the Communist political analysis was in error, or at least ahead of itself, as the decision of the Central Committee at the June Plenum implicitly admits. The final straw was laid on the Communist back this summer, when a series of conferences called for the purpose of seeking a basis of united action among Popular Front elements, while somewhat satisfactory, nevertheless, as Browder reports, "also gave this characteristic—no unanimity on the Farmer-Labor Party." The C. I. O., with its Labor's Non-Partisan League, did not formulate a definite call for a third party as the Communists had expected. Some other progressive political groups which were on the verge of breaking away, for example, the Washington Commonwealth Federation, have elected to continue in the old parties. The C.P.U.S.A., by its decision, has decided not to oppose this tendency and instead of putting all its forces behind the formation of a Farmer-Labor party now urges its members and auxiliaries to work with the progressive elements within each party to defeat the old line conservatives. "Therefore, at this time," continues

the resolution of the June Plenum, "the development of the People's Front can only proceed along such lines as will combine the Farmer-Labor-party form of the People's Front with the simultaneous development of progressive movements within the Democratic party (in some localities also within the Republican party) in elections as well as in other economic and political movements of the masses."

It is clear that a program that will be the basis of unity for such a party must be broad indeed. Earl Browder, in his book *What Is Communism?* gives us a sample platform of a Popular Front party. It is a program "closely connected with the class struggle," and exhibits the same amount of demagoguery as the platform on which he ran as Communist candidate for President in 1936. In this matter at least, the Communist believes in being "all things to all men." In addition, since this is an alliance based on pure expediency for all concerned (how else can you get Methodists and Atheists together?), the appeal must be made on *immediate* issues. Comrade Browder has warned his partisans working within the Popular Front not to permit any speculation over the differences between the revolutionary section, which accepts the class struggle all the way up to the dictatorship of the proletariat, and that other larger section which believes in the class struggle only for the immediate issues. In the words of Browder: "It is better if we continue our debate on this question behind the common line of defense we set up against Fascism, which would stop all our discussions."

For the present, the political activities of the Communist party are guided by the following norms laid down in the resolution of the Central Committee: (1) The Communist party must make a common front with all Left forces to defeat the reactionaries and to strengthen the progressive forces within the Democratic party. (2) "In such cases where the progressive forces succeed in nominating progressive candidates and determining their platforms, the Communists will support such candidates in the election." (3) "Where the progressive candidates are defeated in the primaries every effort must be made to secure independent candidates backed by the same forces, failing which the Communist party may put up its own candidates, giving consideration as to what will be most advantageous for the further development of the People's Front."

The decision of the June Plenum is being carried out. At the Coney Island Velodrome on August 26, Earl Browder declared that the Communists would withdraw their candidates in favor of the American Labor party's nominees in the New York municipal elections, and would observe United Front discipline to bring about the victory of the American Labor party. An exception was made in the case of the councilmanic elections where this would not constitute any opposition apparently to the American Labor party.

In other parts of the United States we find Communists allying themselves with progressive elements for the purpose of bringing about the defeat of the old line conservatives. Singled out as a spe-

cial field for Communist Popular Front activities is the C.I.O.'s political auxiliary, Labor's Non-Partisan League. Washington's Commonwealth Federation has had the approval and support of the Communist party from the very beginning. In California last month the Communist press reported with approval the meeting called together in Fresno by the California Committee of One Hundred for Political Unity. The purpose of the meeting was to call together the "liberals and progressives of all schools, and all sects, and all parties to unite for further action."

It may occasion some surprise to know that the Farmer-Labor party in Minnesota does not fit into the Popular Front scheme. Possibly that may be due to too much Trotskyite anti-Popular Front influence exercised in that region. At any rate, Browder has seen fit to describe it as an "appendage to existing bourgeois parties." In the Communist mind, no good can come out of the Cooperative Commonwealth.

The possibility that Catholics in this country may soon have to make a choice of joining the Popular Front movement is thought-provoking. A recent Communist writer complains bitterly over the refusal of the German Catholics to back the Popular Front movement in that country. In the Popular Front phraseology of the writer, this constitutes "opposition to the unification of all the democratic anti-Fascist and non-Fascist forces." Particular resentment is leveled against the refugee circles gathered around the publication *Der Deutsche Weg*. These groups have advocated the formation of a "third front," rather than ally themselves with either Hitler or the Communists. In the minds of the German Catholics, the aims of the Popular Front are dangerous in principle because based not so much on common *ideals* as on common *sentiments*. This is an apt and pointed distinction, which is equally as valid in this country as it is in Germany.

The Third International, operating through the Communist party of the United States has not substituted evolution for revolution, nor class collaboration for class conflict. When Browder said that a Popular Front political party was of its very nature neither Communist nor anti-Communist, Socialist nor anti-Socialist, he gave us more than merely a good description; he gave us an excellent reason for not cooperating with Communists in any political action under these circumstances. A political party that is neither Communist nor anti-Communist is a party that is unwilling or unable to state its policy on un-American movements. Such a party is founded on hypocrisy. Only a Marxian's devious ratiocinations could produce this heterogeneous admixture of Americanism and Bolshevism. We have tolerated the "no attitude towards Communism" on the part of non-political pink organizations which have a very definite attitude toward everything else. Let us not make the mistake of believing that we can extend this same typical American indifference to a *political* party, whose candidates and whose platform have "no attitude towards Communism."

AMERICAN BIBLE SCHOLARS ORGANIZE FOR NEW ADVANCES

Catholics know the Bible best and hold it longest

WILLIAM H. McCLELLAN, S.J.

ENGLISH-SPEAKING Protestantism, with its Anglican component duly represented, is fond of commemorating one period of its history. That period lay in the reign of Henry VIII, and its title to fame is its fertility in corrupted English versions to the Bible. Tyndale's New Testament of 1525 has lately had its tercentenary. So has Coverdale's Bible of 1535. "Mathew's" version of 1537 and Cranmer's Great Bible of 1539 are next in line, and are not being overlooked. The labored efforts of press and pulpit on the four hundredth anniversaries of these dates do not issue in serious research or solid contribution to history. That ground is methodically cultivated by independent scholars. The recurrent popular celebrations aim only to maintain the curious thesis that their heroes merited undying fame by acquainting the general public with biased translations of the Bible.

It is not that the promoters of these celebrations receive the Bible, like their fathers, as an inspired and inerrant source of Divine Revelation. To them its benefit lies not there. Their animus, freely enough revealed from time to time, is simply that popular persuasion of the sixteenth century, namely, that the Bible is fatally opposed to the Apostolic tradition received and taught by the Catholic Church. This is why Tyndale, Coverdale, "Mathew" and Cranmer are still acclaimed as masters by men whom they themselves could not recognize as fellow-believers.

The fixity of the persuasion itself and the very possibility of its origin are among life's mysteries. From the sober and devout Protestant theologian to the flippant pamphleteer of Free Thought, not a man invokes the Bible against the Catholic Church without owing it to the Catholic Church that he ever heard of the Bible. Even that matchless group of writings would never have seen fifteen centuries—no, nor as many generations—of toilsome reproduction and persistent distribution and constant study, but for the ceaseless labors bestowed upon it by Popes and bishops, scribes and scholars, students and preachers who were all loyal sons of the Universal Church. Of all the Christian ages, of many nations and tongues, they plodded on with pen and parchment through the monotonous task of copying down long lines of letters, so that when eye and

hand had done their part, the mind might dwell in faith on the well conned words, and the tongue impart to others the message of grace and truth, for the very reason that these men were Catholics, and the legitimate followers of those by whom and about whom the Bible had been written. The literature of their texts and versions, their commentaries and homilies, numbers its volumes by myriads. Yet all the while, so we are asked to believe, they were zealously pondering, reproducing and handing on to their successors the charter of their own reprobation!

If Catholic thought has all along been thus obtuse, it shows no symptom of awakening. Its pursuit of biblical study in every branch has never been more active than during the past forty years. Apart from scholarly circles, the reverent study of the Bible in duly authorized translations is not only recommended to the laity, but sanctioned with Papal indulgences. This, too, in spite of the truth that personal recourse to the Sacred Scriptures is no more necessary to us than it was to those who first received the word of life from Christ's Apostles.

Of those earliest Catholics only the Jewish converts had the Old Testament, and none at all had yet the New. At the end of the first century, with the last Apostle still on earth, a single copy of one Gospel or of two or three Epistles might have been the proud possession of some great metropolitan parish which had heard of the existence of other inspired Christian writings, but had never seen them. By the close of a second century such local collections were both larger and more common, while perhaps only the higher clergy could have named the entire list. Probably the third century had passed, and the end of persecution was nearly at hand, before the complete New Testament existed in a score of copies.

Meanwhile, ten thousand Christian martyrs had shown the astonished world the victory of Faith and charity in Christ. Not one was a "Bible Christian"; not one had drawn his triumphant Faith from a written page. To them, as to us, the Gospel was "preached" (or, as the Greek says, "proclaimed"). To them and to us alike "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ"

(Rom. x, 17). No one's salvation ever hung upon his knowing how to read.

The Catholic, who never learned to abuse the Bible, has also never learned to underrate it. It still serves him as St. Luke's Gospel was to serve his Christian friend Theophilus—"that he may know," as the Greek tersely puts it, "the security of those words in which he has been catechized." The "word of Christ" is his "by hearing"; the written word both confirms and expands it by recording the facts of its origin. That the record is as true as its Divine Author, the Catholic reader also firmly believes, not on the self-persuasion of an "inner light," but on the solemn testimony of that very Church which, he is assured, dares not face the Bible's opposition.

On the other hand, his unaltered veneration for inspired Scripture is no blind homage to a veiled prophet. The myth that non-Catholic scholars were the first to study the Bible critically obsesses only those who have not deemed the writings of Origen, Chrysostom, Jerome and Augustine worthy of their enlightened attention, and who prefer to ignore the fact that every principle and method of sound criticism was applied to Holy Scripture by the earliest leaders of Catholic thought. They knew the Bible to be human as well as Divine, and that its human factors could be clarified by human methods.

And thereby hangs a tale of recent events which, though they may not loom large in future history, are worth recording as a forward step in the Catholic tradition of biblical study. This Review has already (*Comment*: October 23) briefly noticed the Third National Catechetical Congress of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine held in St. Louis. In a basement room of the great building there assembled on two successive days a group of thirty priests, comprising the smallest unit of the Confraternity but marking an epoch in Catholic Action. For the first time in the history of the Church in America, her biblical scholars possessed an organization of their own. Their society was now a year old, and this second annual meeting enacted a constitution and by-laws, elected officers for the coming year, and shared the first fruits of study and mutual discussion on some technical problems. It might have been called a professors' study club, since its members, now about eighty in number, are teachers of biblical subjects in our seminaries. Already it spans the country from coast to coast.

The Catholic Biblical Association of America owes its chief aim to its origin from the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. As a division of the latter, it places at the disposal of our Hierarchy a trained body of unofficial consultants, competent to handle such topics of general instruction as may involve some technical research in biblical learning. But there are other aims subordinate to this. There is the benefit accruing to its members from closer personal acquaintance and exchange of the fruits of individual study. Better still, the Association avows the definite aim of sharing with the laity the serviceable results of its work, and the hope of affording the laity some opportunity of working together with it in the advancement and diffusion of knowledge of the Bible.

There is much development yet to await. For the issuance of a regular journal, or even of occasional means of public information, we must wait a little longer. But one task, surely the most urgent, has already been received from the Episcopal Committee. Some members of the Association have been charged with the production of a new English version of the New Testament for general use. A year of work has already borne good fruit, for the translation of the text is nearly complete, though a companion-volume of commentary is not so far advanced. The editors, after all, have their regular duties as teachers to claim the major share of time and energy.

As it may one day supply our English readings of the Epistles and Gospels of the Mass, the new version is not taken directly from the Greek, but from the authorized Latin of the Vulgate, like the approved English versions now in circulation. Upon these, however, it hopes to improve a little in conformity with present standards and needs. Like all things human, it is sure to have its imperfections. Well aware of this, its authors yet hope to provide American Catholics with a convenient means of closer and more intelligent familiarity with the New Testament than any now at hand. The realization of such an aim, even in moderate measure, will mark one more perceptible advance in that true knowledge and fruitful use of the Bible which has never for a moment ceased to engage the best efforts of Catholic learning.

HOLLYWOOD BIOGRAPHY

RECENTLY I was startled to hear the representative of a rural library service declare that the two books most in demand at the moment were *The Prisoner of Zenda* and *The Life of Emile Zola*. It was a galvanizing reminder that motion pictures, along with doing literature an occasional service, are doing innumerable innocent readers a grave disservice. An interest in the career of Zola might conceivably end with the perusal of his biography. But the current film based on his life is such a blatant example of the biography of hero worship that it may well provide an incentive for going further. For how many people can be swept away with enthusiasm and bombarded with a man's virtues and have no wish to read something of what he has written? The resuscitation of Zola and his works, which had settled to their appropriate level on the counters of cheapjack mongers of lurid literature, can and must be credited to the motion picture, whatever the distinction is worth.

Consider the tenor of this so-called biography. It is a partisan, sentiment-ridden glorification of a man whose literary ambition was to expose the evil in the world for the sake of the exposition, for the naturalist is not a reformer. Zola is depicted as a man who struggled against poverty and persecution

to attain fame; that fame was won by the publication of, in Browning's phrase, a "scrofulous French novel." He is honored as the champion of truth, and the supreme proof adduced is his defense of Dreyfus. The film is an example of the crude suppression of facts which do not strengthen the main thesis.

Like the "liberals" of his time and ours, Zola was the champion of truth only in so far as it fitted into his rigid pattern of secular dogmas. One would be more content to believe that his espousal of Dreyfus was an instance of his spontaneous love of justice, and not, perhaps, merely another opportunity to berate French officialdom, had Zola shown an equal spirit on another occasion. It is a cardinal tenet of naturalism that an author shall use no particle of imagination in his work, that all material must come through the senses and be handled with the utmost objectivity. And so we are forced to conclude that Zola used a more disreputable substitute, which may be called intellectual dishonesty, in his book, *Lourdes*, in which he distorts the facts of an authentic cure which he had witnessed in order to disprove the truth of miracles. Any second-rate book reviewer will assert blandly that this particular work in the Rougon-Macquart series is aimed at superstitions in religion. It is characteristic of liberal superstition that Zola should have attempted to obliterate by a wretched fiction what had been attested to by medical science.

And, too, how square the literary output of Zola with the haloed figure venerated by Hollywood? Even granting him the privileges of an objective observer, could his view of life and of human nature have been so lofty? Listen to Jean Carrère:

Unbalanced men, scoundrels, thieves, prostitutes, drunkards, stupid dreamers, unhealthy peasants, degraded workers, unclean bourgeois, cowardly soldiers, avaricious ministers, feeble artists, hysterical priests—all this is offered to us as a mirror of human nature. Not a single great man, not an elect soul, not a noble and strong individuality, not a hero—that is supposed to be the measure of our time. No joy, no triumphant effort, not a single healthy development—this is a picture of our life. We are promised a world and we get a hospital. Surely this is incredible ignorance or incredible perversity.

But is there any suggestion of this Zola in the film which purports to be his biography? All is sweetness and light. Perhaps a reminder is in order also, that in extolling Zola, the movies have lauded that false liberalism which has been the curse of France since the Revolution and whose chief note is simply the exaltation of the human above the Divine. Paradoxically, it does not celebrate man as a demi-god or a superman but as an animal. It is an anti-Catholic tradition, and essentially anti-Christian; do the movies intend to foster it? It was, after all, by no typographical error but by a shrewdly elaborated advertising campaign that the immoral Nana became the "immortal" Nana.

This question of Zola's screen treatment is part of a larger question still. There is good reason to suspect that the recent biographies emanating from Hollywood are, consciously or unconsciously, anti-Catholic, or, at the least, indifferent to truth and accuracy. There seems to be no aim to produce an honest biography, perhaps for the reason that the

natural limitations of the screen make this impossible. Complex characters are virtually unknown in the movies and, since the medium is still black and white in more than one sense, historical figures appear in one color or the other, depending upon public sentiment or prejudice. Hollywood has fallen heir to the kind of biography which has not held a serious place in literature since Lytton Strachey's time. Hence those personages who have been garlanded in the popular imagination by the Arthur Brisbane system of mass education get better than a square deal. Take the case of a man named Voltaire. Whether justly or not, he stands as a symbol of atheism and anti-Catholicism and, by canonizing the man and all his works, the movies have added strength to the free-thinker's jibes. The popular picture of Voltaire now is of a humorous, kindly and righteous old gentleman who looks somewhat like George Arliss.

In his screen "biography," Cardinal Richelieu was an intriguing combination of Machiavelli, Houdini and Robin Hood. But to choose a more pretentious and subtle example of Hollywood distortion, consider the attempted biography of Pasteur. If we are to be grateful for small favors, the subject was accorded the favor of the scenarist. What sort of biography was it, however, which left audiences with the impression that Pasteur was a materialistic scientist with supreme faith in the all-seeing Microscope, rather than a man who wished, with each increase of scientific knowledge, for the simple Faith of a Breton peasant? Was there any vestige of Catholicism about the man, and can you portray a man in the round and omit all reference to his religion? It may be argued that any show of Catholicism would have limited its appeal, perhaps aroused resentment among those liberals who objected to the prominence of a priest in the innocuous film, *San Francisco*. A sad commentary on American tolerance! And yet Richelieu, painted as a holy mountebank, a political opportunist, was shown in the very act of saying Mass. The unsavory characters of *The Plough* and *the Stars* were shown on the steps of the church shortly after they had engaged in a brawl in a Dublin pub. There is no hesitancy, it would seem, in putting the Catholic brand on the goats of Hollywood biography; there is great fear, however, lest the lambs appear in the true fold.

And the end of the problem is not near. Praised by critics and public alike, the producers are going ahead with their sham biographies. French literature seems to engage their attention presently. Here, certainly, is a fertile source of material for this new biography for the edification of the masses, comprising, as it does, all shades of purple from simple hedonism to complex diabolism. What scabrous literary reputation is next to be enhanced by the estimable Paul Muni? Anatole France has been mentioned. But surely this cynical atheist, this apologist for Marx and Lenin, this esthetic voluptuary is not sainted enough for the celluloid accolade. Any student of Gallic eroticism could suggest a worthier choice. Baudelaire, perhaps; or the Marquis de Sade.

THOMAS J. FITZMORRIS

WITH SCRIP AND STAFF

ON THE HIGHWAY

HARDLY had I finished writing last week's hope for more miracles when I found myself, quite unexpectedly, traveling over Route 606, which leads among many other interesting features past Saint William's Church and School. Some years ago today, November 17, which is the Feast of Saint Gregory the Wonderworker, I proposed to that Saint that he might parallel in our day and time the moving of a mountain to make room for a church which won him so much fame back in the third century, A.D. Saint William's, I suggested, would be considerably better off if church and school were out on the main highway, away from the interminable clay roads that kept people, teachers and children away. I informed him of a ten-acre lot where the buildings could be moved to, and proprietor's consent had been already obtained. In lieu of that, he might arrange for some Federal and State appropriations to come that way, which were now held up by local politicians. He could choose any kind of a miracle, as long as people could reach Saint William's without the aid of a four-mule team, an ox-cart or a skiff.

It took Saint Gregory some years to get around the local politicians, and Saint Joseph had to be called in sundry times to help. Now, however, you can stand on the front steps of Saint William's Church and see Standard Oil and Shell tanks rolling by just as pleasantly as upon the Lincoln Highway. After enjoying that experience, I return to town and see the miracle, or pair of miracles, that Father Malachy wrought. Father Malachy's experience typifies what happens when you suddenly meet the Eternal and the Infinite upon the road of life.

There are two circumstances, you may recall, where such a meeting with the Infinite Power and Attributes of God may take place. We may meet with Him *in domo* or *in via*, in His own House or out upon the highway.

If we meet the Eternal in His own House, He is secluded from the disturbing world. He is in His sanctuary, in His holy place. The doors of the shrine are closed, and within there is dignity, order, calm and the rhythm and solemnity of worship. There the Eternal is contacted by prayer. There the Eternal Incarnate descends upon the altar, and dwells in the Tabernacle.

But we cannot live in that House all the days of our lives, whatever King David may have wished to do. Our existence is out upon the road, and most people's existences are trailer existences. They have not even the protection of a hearth or a farm or a permanent spot of any sort. Out of the brief hours or half-hours that they can snatch here and there to visit the Eternal *in domo*, they have to

look for Him *in via*. Yet here, too, they find Him, as a Traveler like themselves, as one who was born upon the side of the road when He began His earthly traveling, Who spent the last three years of His earthly life in perpetual journeyings.

After they have rested up from their Fall exertions for God, country and Alma Mater, I should like to put a question to any of our football champions. Did you every try to cover as much ground walking, in a semi-tropical climate, without modern shoes and camping equipment, and with as much grinding hard work by day and as scant nourishment, as did the Son of Mary during the three years of His Public Life? Try it for one season, and you will get more aches in your powerful feet than any Thanksgiving Day ever registered. Christ, our God, was absolutely, and terrifyingly, a Man.

When man, the finite, the next-to-nothing, the soul-that-always-will-be bound to a body that never really is but is only everlastingly becoming—when this midge meets the Eternal and the All-Powerful upon the road, let us say through a miracle or any manifestation of God's Presence, something terrific happens in that midge's interior. He undergoes a crisis. That crisis is the crisis of his existence itself. That tiny existence, which is utterly incommunicable to anything outside of itself *as an existence*, is called upon nevertheless to yield something of its inmost essence to the vast Traveler whom it has met upon the road.

The Traveler may ask Belief, as Father Malachy persuaded him to do. Then we have the crisis of Faith, the prime and most fundamental of all crises, which is the real subject of Brian Doherty's inspired adaptation for the legitimate stage of *Father Malachy's Miracle*, Bruce Marshall's story. The Eternal may demand hope, which means the crisis in the modern world of ideologies that capitalize on despair. Or the crisis may be of charity.

As Father Malachy has dramatized the crisis of Faith, so we may see in due time, through the genius of our Catholic Theatre movement, a dramatization of many another crisis of this type, of hope, of charity—individual or conjugal or social—or of penance and perfection. The important thing is that we recognize such a crisis as the prime drama of humanity, also that the drama take place truly and really *upon the road* that we actually travel, neither better nor worse—not a swamp, not a paradise, but just *in via*, where all of us are walking.

When we reach the end of the road there will be no more distinction of *domus* and *via*, of secluded home and perilous highway. Home and road will be blended in the *patria*, the great open country where the finite finds its home in the Eternal.

JOHN LAFARGE

VANISHING HOMES

SEARCHING for a subject for his daily cartoon, George Clark recently hit upon a topic that is more important than many realize. He sketches a school bus, with a mother helping her little boy to get in and remarking to the driver: "Tell the teacher to find some reason to keep him in after school. I can't be home until 5." There we have a parental reaction that is as common as it is unhealthy.

For a number of years the public schools have been performing functions which in reality belong to the home. Parents for the most part have welcomed the change. City apartments and city tenements are small, while playgrounds are few, they argue, and the children must have some place in which they can amuse themselves without the danger of being run down by automobiles. Hence they file no objections when the children return home at an hour even later than that specified by the lady of the school bus, and they make no investigation. In their day, they know, children did not hang about the school premises a moment longer than was necessary. The dismissal bell was still ringing while they were on their way home. But times have changed, they conclude, and for the better.

It is undeniable that in this age schools simply must undertake work for children that once was done in the home. It is undeniable, but at the same time regrettable, since the expansion of the modern school has caused perhaps a majority of fathers and mothers to forget that the home is the chief factor in the child's education. In many instances, particularly in our large cities, mothers send their small children to the kindergarten primarily to avoid the trouble of caring for them at home. Later they view with equanimity and even satisfaction, free text-books, free lunches, free baths, free transportation and free moving-pictures.

No doubt some of these services may be necessary. But they will never give us a boy—not unknown under the old regime—who was willing to work at odd jobs to pay for his school books, or parents ready to deny themselves real necessities to provide their children with little parties at home, and similar domestic amusements. The huge modern school has destroyed something that is precious in the education of the child, something that is necessary if initiative, self-reliance and proper independence are to be fostered.

By comparison our Catholic elementary and secondary schools are Spartan institutions. For the better care of children in the poorer sections, it would be a blessing if they could give more. But even more regrettable is the delusion found in some Catholic homes that once the child has been entrusted to a Catholic school, father and mother have done all that is necessary. The blunt truth is that with the child registered at school, their part in its education does not cease, but is intensified. At best education is a long and toilsome process. It will not end successfully unless all the factors concerned in it, parents as well as teachers, work in harmony.

SENATE K.K.K.

ONCE more the Klan fires flame in the Senate. Gentlemen from the South are thanking God for the Supreme Court, but particularly for Mr. Justice Black. As is well known, this great-hearted "liberal" was the spearhead of all attacks upon that device to protect the constitutional rights of a minority people through the anti-lynching bill. In beginning the filibuster, Senator Connally, of Texas, praised his Maker for the presence on the bench of this great "liberal" who, he was certain, would hold it unconstitutional. The Senator from Texas knows his Klan and his Justice.

LET THE PEOPLE

UNDER the Constitution Congress alone can declare war. But by the use of powers confided to him by the Constitution, the President can create a situation which practically forces Congress to declare that a state of war exists between the United States and some foreign country. In view of these facts, the constitutional amendment proposed on November 16 by Senator LaFollette, of Wisconsin, merits serious consideration.

The LaFollette amendment begins with the blunt proviso: "The President shall not wage warfare abroad without a declaration of war by Congress." The statement gives point to the fact that it is possible for a President to use his constitutional powers unwisely. The amendment therefore proposes that, except in case of invasion, the authority of Congress to declare war "shall not become effective until confirmed by a majority of all votes cast in a nation-wide referendum." When necessary, Congress will by concurrent resolution propose two questions to the citizens of the States: "Shall the United States declare war on . . . ?" and "Shall the Congress be authorized to conscript men for military service overseas?"

Undoubtedly the implications of this proposal are extremely wide. Under the present method it must be admitted, as Senator LaFollette contends, that Congress can "transform the whole nation into an armed camp, and in effect suspend the whole Bill of Rights." It can not only draft every able-bodied man into service, but can send him abroad to engage in wars

LABOR CONFERENCES

THE C. I. O. is afflicted with growing pains. The A. F. of L. is like a choleric old gentleman who sees some of his estates slipping from him. But as the younger organization emerges from its adolescent disorders, the older will realize that all is not lost. Both will then be able to shake hands and forget the past. There is room, and need, for both groups working in harmony, and it may, perhaps, be best for each to labor in its own way in its particular field, with both always ready to join forces against the common enemy. But labor will lose much if these conferences end in wrangling.

THE PEOPLE DECIDE

which a wiser policy would have averted. Unfortunately, it must be further admitted that *inter arma silent leges*, when war comes laws lapse, and all the people, whether in the service or out of it, are obliged to live under military rule. As this Review contended at the time (to the serious concern of the officials at Washington) the Espionage Act of 1917 did not pay even lip-service to the Bill of Rights. And at an earlier time, Lincoln openly contended that in order to save the Constitution, he was justified in setting the Constitution aside. It is a dangerous policy.

A President's defective diplomacy and a jingo spirit in Congress can plunge the people into miseries which a decade of reconstruction can barely alleviate. For us the concomitants of the World War were the obligation to sink most of our navy, as Senator Reed, of Missouri declared, and the assumption, under the euphemism of "loans," of the war debts incurred by the foreign nations whose unbridled ambition brought on the conflict. In addition, nearly 200,000 of our young men died on foreign battle fields, and twice that number were crippled. We are still paying the price in the depression.

If we must have another war, let the decision be made by the people, who must pay the cost in blood, money and years of suffering. Their wishes should be consulted more directly than is possible by a vote in Congress. In our judgment, Senator LaFollette's amendment might be styled "an amendment to keep the United States out of foreign wars."

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

THE country will observe with satisfaction two points in the President's Message to Congress. The first is the absence of truculent references to economic royalists and others who have dared oppose the President's policies, and the second is the President's statement that he has conferred with leaders in business. It has long been felt that the President has been too completely surrounded, if not by "yes men," by associates who prefer not to cross the President's opinions. As Postmaster General Farley expressed the matter some weeks ago, every Administration needs a good opposition. If the President cannot get it from a party, the greater is his need to get it from his private advisers.

It is also gratifying to know that the President at last sees that his policies have not established another Utopia in this country. It is true that conditions of today are not those which paralyzed the country five years ago, but we could wish that they were better. The recovery of business in his first Administration the President attributed to his planned economy when he said: "We planned it that way, and don't let anybody tell you differently." We recall the phrase not to score a point, but merely to suggest the possibility that the present recession may be due, at least in part, to the effects of that planning.

There will be general agreement with the President's position that the country must find new ways in which private capital can be profitably invested. To discover these ways is the task of Congress, and it is no exaggeration to say that an upward sweep towards a more complete recovery, or a downward plunge to a deeper depression, depends upon what Congress does in the next few months. The particular way suggested by the President is housing erected by private capital.

No doubt, more and better housing is needed in all our large cities, and in particular, it may be noted in passing, in Washington itself. The difficulty here lies in the fact that if hours grow shorter in the building trades and wages higher, at the same time that the price of materials rises, private capital will not be able to recoup itself from investments of this type. The rentals would necessarily be fixed at a prohibitive rate. With the Government building houses, private capital, at least under the present set-up, is pushed out of the picture.

A more equitable taxation, a balanced budget and revision of the Departments are other matters recommended to Congress. As to the need of the first two, there is substantial agreement, but what looks like hopeless disagreement as to the means of securing them. This is not the first time the Government has been plagued by the inequity of its taxing-system, and if Thomas Jefferson is right, it will not be the last. That the tax-base should be broadened to include incomes now left untouched, seems fairly clear. Whether it was so intended or not, all small incomes in certain groups now pay a tax through the deductions demanded under the Social Security Act. No political party wishes the

odium of extending this tax, but in our judgment an extension is not only necessary to stave off bankruptcy, but wise as a matter of internal policy. Until every American realizes that Government expenditures are taken from his pocket, he will stand by in utter indifference as Congress appropriates billions, for which he pays.

Hardly less important than the President's attempts to build another Supreme Court is his demand for re-organization of the Departments. If reorganization simply meant the introduction of simple methods to avoid complexity, long in use in large industrial establishments, no objection could be offered. Should the President declare that he needs fifty new secretaries instead of the "slight increase in the staff in the White House," to employ the language of the Message, we can see no reason why he should be denied them. But when we are asked for "one or more departments," "a budget and efficiency agency, a personnel agency, and a planning agency," and "authority" for the President "to arrange all present and future strictly executive activities in or under regular executive departments," we must stop to pause. Does the President mean to bring under his authority the agencies and bureaus created by Congress which at present are not under the control of the Executive? If Congress grants that, it will establish an unfortunate and perhaps fatal precedent. President Roosevelt's purposes and ambitions may be beyond all criticism, but no one can answer for his successor.

Highly unsatisfactory, at least in its present form, is the President's policy on civil service. If the executive orders which the President contemplates are intended to "cover in" all employees who secured their positions without satisfying the demands of civil service, they will merely make a bad situation infinitely worse. Civil service is weaker than it has been for fifty years. What civil service needs is not executive orders of this kind, but action by Congress and enforcement by a Commission neither looking to the Administration for favor, nor controlled by it. We do not want another kind of pie-counter, but the destruction of all Federal pie-counters.

SPANISH RELIEF

SUFFICIENT social problems, perhaps, weigh down upon us in the United States, and our maladjustments require all of our charitable excess. However, Spain, divided through sixteen months by a battle-line, shaken by deadly explosives and sharp bullets, is peopled by innocent victims of a Civil War that cannot be stopped through human means from proceeding to the ultimate stage of national exhaustion. Through the services of the America Spanish Relief Fund, it is hoped that every Catholic in the United States may find a way, despite our own local and national necessities, to contribute a poor man's mite or a rich man's bounty for the food and the clothing and the medical care and the housing of the orphaned and destitute children of Spain.

ADVENT

WHEN you were a child you used to "save up" for Christmas. You wished to have a little money to buy a Christmas present for the members of the family. Beginning about Thanksgiving Day, you would put your pennies away, one at a time. That called for sacrifice, but it made you happy. By preparing not only to receive, but to give, you were getting ready for the celebration of Christmas in the very best way.

Tomorrow the Church asks us children of a larger growth to prepare for Christmas. She wants us to save up the pennies of our little virtues. If we have none, she bids us work, and acquire some. She thinks we ought to give something to the Infant Saviour Who has given us everything. We say that we love Him, but love, wrote Saint Ignatius, "consists in mutual interchange, that is to say, in the lover giving and communicating with the beloved what he has or can give, and on the other hand, in the beloved sharing with the lover."

What can we give Him? Of ourselves, have we anything but our shortcomings and our sins? When we look at ourselves critically, can we honestly conclude that there is anything about us worth giving, or that anyone would care to have?

Let us forget the last question, and turn to the first. We can give the Infant Saviour our heart. Poor as it is, He desires it. Stained as it is with sin, He asks it.

But like a good mother, the Church suggests that we try to give Him a heart as little unworthy of Him as we can possibly make it. "Tomorrow Advent begins," she tells us. "It is a time to be used in making your hearts ready for the coming of Christ. At the outset, read what Our Lord has said (Saint Luke, xxi, 25—33) not about His first but about His second coming on Judgment Day. Meditate upon His words, and you will be eager to purify your souls from sin, so that when He comes to judge you, you will be ready."

It is not a very pleasant picture that we find in tomorrow's Gospel. The signs which precede that day, *dies illa*, will cause the souls of men to wither away "for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world." If our hearts are filled with fear as we look upon that picture, it will be a sanctifying fear. Love, it is true, casteth out fear, but only when it is perfect. We cannot safely go through this world like so many Pollyannas. We must face the truth, and the truth is that men who do not work out their salvation in fear and trembling will not work it out at all.

Fear and trembling, then, are wholesome, particularly during Advent. Once upon a time, there was almost as much fasting in Advent as in Lent, but the Church has tempered her discipline for us who are poor-spirited descendants of strong-souled sires. But she tells us that we must work earnestly to curb our wayward impulses, to get rid of our bad habits, to purify our hearts, and to make them somewhat less unworthy of Our Lord's acceptance on Christmas morning. Let us begin the very first day of Advent.

CHRONICLE

WASHINGTON. The special session of Congress began November 15, the twenty-fourth in the history of the United States. A few hours later the Senate was tied up in a filibuster over the House-approved Gavagan Anti-Lynching Bill. Senator Connally had the clerk read a speech made by former Senator Black when he was filibustering against similar legislation, while other Southern Senators prepared to prolong the filibuster. . . . Senators LaFollette and Capper sponsored constitutional amendments to take from Congress the power of declaring a foreign war except after an affirmative vote following a popular referendum. In Senator LaFollette's proposal a check on the President is included. . . . Senator Harrison denounced penalties put on business by taxation. He forwarded a telegram to Secretary Morgenthau virtually demanding revision of the undistributed-profits tax. . . . Sentiment in both the Senate and House to put aid to business ahead of the President's four-point program appeared strong. House Rules Committee Chairman O'Connor declared it essential to stop abusing business. No one gives a thought to 5,000,000 private employers, he said. "We are picking on them, abusing them and snooping on them." . . . Congress was said to be in a more independent mood than at any time since Mr. Roosevelt became President. . . . The House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Taxation agreed on changes in the capital gains tax designed to stimulate business. . . . In a six-to-three vote the Supreme Court supported State powers. A corporation dissolved by Illinois could not be revived for the purpose of seeking financial reorganization under the National Bankruptcy Act, it held. . . . Senator Burke declared the Supreme Court should pass judgment on the eligibility of Justice Black. Attorney General Cummings should start quo warranto proceedings to determine Mr. Black's status, he felt. . . . The census of the unemployed was begun.

THE PRESIDENT. Invited by Haiti's Chief Executive, Mr. Roosevelt agreed to join Mexico and Cuba in mediating the Haitian Dominican Republic dispute. More than 3,000 Haitian men, women and children were reported massacred by the Dominicans. . . . To the special session of Congress, the President, instead of appearing in person, sent his message to be read by a clerk. The message was conciliatory to business. "The present decline has not reached serious proportions," it said. "But it has the effect of decreasing the national income—and that is a matter of definite concern . . . an immediate task is to try to increase the use of private capital to create employment. . . . Unjust provisions (in tax laws) should be removed. . . . We should give special consideration to the lightening of in-

equitable burdens on the enterprise of the small business men of the nation." . . . The President made no definite proposals toward stimulating business in an effort to check the recession. On the other hand he hurled no harsh phrases at business as in former utterances. The Chief Executive's four-point legislative program dealing with agriculture, wages and hours, governmental reorganization and regional planning was recommended for prompt passage.

AT HOME. Most Reverend James Edward Kearney, former Bishop of Salt Lake City, was installed as fifth Bishop of Rochester, N. Y. . . . Norman Thomas, Socialist leader, assailed the Soviet dictatorship. Hungering for power is as strong as hungering for profit: men may be exploited under systems other than the capitalist system, he maintained. . . . The United States Conference of Mayors convened in Washington, declared Congress must increase Federal relief funds to combat unemployment. The Mayors asked the A. F. of L. and C. I. O. to adjust their differences in the public interest. More than 400 Mayors listened as J. Warren Madden, of the National Labor Relations Board, charged some cities with frustrating the nation's labor laws.

JAPAN-CHINA. Following three months of ceaseless battering, Shanghai was at peace. Japanese possessed it completely. Twenty miles westward, Japanese columns were pushing Chinese forces back over new battlefields. 200,000 Japanese, with superior equipment, hurled themselves at 400,000 Chinese, who slowly retreated toward a new "Hindenburg Line," fifty miles from Shanghai. Beyond that line, 125 miles, lies Nanking, China's capital. Japan's Navy was blasting booms, other obstacles blocking the river route to Nanking. In the battle for Shanghai, about 100,000 Chinese and Japanese were killed or wounded. 1,000,000 Chinese were destitute. Hundreds of millions of dollars in property loss were marked up as the bombs and shells ceased shrieking in the stricken city. The flag of the Rising Sun fluttered everywhere except in the foreign concessions. . . . The Chinese Government commenced transferring Ministries from Nanking to points further inland, but most of the Ministers will remain in Nanking until the Nipponese threat becomes more imminent. . . . In Shantung Province, Japanese legions drove the Chinese armies southward across the Yellow River. One Japanese column was six miles north of Tsinan, Shantung capital. . . . One estimate placed the casualties suffered by Chinese on the Shanghai and North China fronts at 800,000.

SPAIN. The Leftist Government expressed its "profound displeasure" to Great Britain because the latter exchanged commercial agents with the Franco regime. . . . Nationalist headquarters reported that Franco forces had inflicted severe losses on attacking Red troops on the northern Aragon front, and completely repulsed them. . . . Sam Baron, American Socialist, jailed by Communists in Valencia, was released, left for Paris. He said the plight of the civil population in Red territory was desperate. He referred to a " . . . reign of terror by secret police, informers and spies of the Communist Cheka. " . . . Nationalist headquarters reported the arrival in Spain of ten Russian and four Czechoslovakian officers to aid the Red army in the expected Nationalist drive. . . .

- - -

BRUSSELS PARLEY. Japan formally rejected a second invitation to participate in the Nine-Power conference in Brussels. . . . Nineteen Powers were represented at the conference. Fifteen of them voted to adopt a mild criticism of Japan, asserting Japan was "out of step with the rest of the world," offering reasons why she should talk over her Chinese invasion with her associate guarantors of Chinese integrity. Italy voted against the resolution. Norway, mouthpiece for the three Scandinavian nations, declined to vote at all. . . . Japan assailed the resolution; said it was signed by one nation, Russia, notorious for her constant interference in the domestic affairs of other nations through the Third International; that other nations signing the resolution were repudiators of their debts to the United States. . . . Japanese were delighted that President Roosevelt's message to Congress contained not the slightest reference to the Far Eastern imbroglio. . . . Any material aid rendered to the Chinese would be regarded as a hostile act by Japan, Japanese spokesmen revealed.

- - -

GREAT BRITAIN. The British cabinet humiliated Foreign Secretary Eden by deciding in his absence to dispatch Lord Halifax, Lord President of the Council, to Berlin in an effort to achieve an Anglo-German understanding. Secretary Eden opposed such action. . . . Lord Halifax, accompanied only by his valet, departed for Naziland. . . . Leopold, King of Belgium, visiting England was honored by a State ball. Their Majesties, King George and Queen Elizabeth, broke a precedent. They danced at the same time their guests were dancing. . . . The Government announced it hopes soon to have gas masks for the entire population. . . . "Tory Socialism" advanced another step: the Government's Coal Bill revealed that all Britain's coal will pass into State ownership July 1, 1942. . . . Former Prime Minister MacDonald's family declined to have him buried in Westminster Abbey. He will be buried in his native Lossiemouth, Scotland. . . . While King George was attending Armistice Day ceremonies, a lunatic cried: "Stop all this hypocrisy; you are deliberately preparing for war." . . . Britain and the United States were negotiating a trade pact.

GERMANY. Pagan exercises were spreading through Storm Troops and the Hitler Elite Guard. A new religion is rising in their ranks. Christian and anti-Christian units are crystallizing in every community throughout the Reich. Army chaplains informed Hitler this situation is a threat to national unity, a menace to military solidity. . . . A foreign correspondent for the Havas News Agency was ejected from Germany because he wrote home that the epizootic of hoof and mouth disease in Southwestern Germany was the result of the Four-Year plan. . . . Arnold Bernstein, head of the Arnold Bernstein and Red Star shipping lines was in court charged with treason, violation of the foreign exchange control laws. . . . Rudolf Hess, deputy leader of the National Socialist party issued a decree excluding clergy from membership in the party. . . . Five German consulates in Russia were closed, the consuls withdrawn.

- - -

RUSSIA. White Russia experienced another shake-up. Its second President in five months was pushed out of office by Stalin. The Vice Premier was also ousted. Last June, A. G. Chervikov, then President, committed suicide when Stalin's purge penetrated White Russia. Forty-five of his colleagues were accused of treason, thrown into dungeons. . . . Ten persons were shot in Kazakstan, charged with nationalist tendencies. Four citizens in the Vladivostok region looked into blazing guns, charged with sabotaging grain. . . . Foreign Commissar Maxim Litvinov was being harassed by secret police. They were ransacking the Foreign Commissariat, arresting officials. . . . Russian ambassadors were being called to Moscow for interrogation. The Russian Ambassador to Berlin was missing. The Ambassador to Poland was recalled and then arrested. The Minister to Lithuania was ordered to hurry back to the Kremlin. The Minister to Turkey came back, found himself in jail. Arrests, deportations, executions of leading Finnish and Estonian Communists destroyed their Leningrad agencies.

- - -

FOOTNOTES. Pope Pius will name five Cardinals, including Archbishop Hinsley of Westminster, England. . . . Henri Bérenger, chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, declared Japan threatened France with military reprisals for any intervention in the Sino-Japanese conflict. French ships loaded with munitions were headed for Indo-China. . . . Lists of killed and wounded in Palestine rioting mounted. . . . Brazil's new Government is not Fascist, will not make pacts with European nations, President Vargas declared. . . . Philippines' President Manuel Quezon said he was receptive to the idea of a dominion status for the Philippines, but that the proposals "must come from some one else." . . . Mexico's Pozarica oil field is the richest in the world next to the Iraq field. Mexico gave full-control concessions in Pozarica to a British group. Britain will not have to depend on Iraq. . . . Mexican seizure of American-owned oil fields was being studied by Washington.

CORRESPONDENCE

PRESS PROPAGANDA

EDITOR: As one who has spent about fifteen years on the staffs of newspapers, I should like to register a mild objection to Father Toomey's vigorous article, *Pointing a Finger at Press Propaganda* (AMERICA, November 6). I cannot believe that the larger American newspapers are deliberately trying to discredit or insult the Church and to aid the cause of her enemies. That would be stupid, to say the least.

It may be true that the press as well as the public has been victimized in a measure by propaganda in Spain, Russia, Mexico and Germany; that on the whole dispatches from the Spanish front have seemed to favor the Loyalist cause above the Nationalist. I doubt that a thorough analysis of news columns would clearly bear out such a contention; but even if it should, the blame rests primarily on the sources of news and not on the outlet.

The first object of American correspondents (who certainly are not all agents of Moscow) in Spain or anywhere else is to produce stories. That's what they get paid for. Under abnormal conditions of warfare and censorship they must write what they are told in interviews if they cannot always see for themselves what is going on.

It would not be in accord with journalistic impartiality or American neutrality to mass all the correspondents on one side or the other. When the Spanish civil war broke out it was easier, obviously, to get news from the existing regime at Madrid than from the Nationalists in Morocco. This fact in no way proves that the correspondents prefer to cable dispatches from the Reds and that the editors back home prefer to use them. Now that General Franco controls such a large area in the country, news from his side with its claims and counter-claims is more abundant.

It seems to me that instead of tilting at the daily press (which does err, of course) for printing news we do not like, we Catholics ought to concentrate our attack on the sources of propaganda, as many able defenders of the Church already are doing. And it is not difficult to get our defense into print. Witness the space given in the *New York Times* to the Catholic refutation of the Protestant assault on the Spanish Bishops' letter. It is rarely difficult to get any real Catholic news into the daily press.

Instead of talking of organized wrath and boycotts, I think it is up to us to do a little better job of publicity.

Roselle, N. J.

ARTHUR D. MCAGHON

EDITOR: Father John A. Toomey should never have written that article. Not that Father Toomey is anything but absolutely right, but he should realize at this late date that appealing to modern

American Catholics to be anything other than apathetic, sheepish, embarrassed and vigorously uninterested in doing things is a pure waste of effort.

It is undoubtedly true that Catholics in the United States have no desire to bring the press into line, because this would involve some degree of trouble and, what is worse, might make them appear zealous, even fanatical, to their agnostic associates. And if there is one thing the American Catholic dreads for himself (and condemns in every other Catholic), it is the appearance of zeal or fanaticism which might lead to criticism from non-Catholics. Thus, despite the obvious fact that the United States is becoming daily more and more belligerently pro-Red—with the rich promise of an early participation in foreign war and with the sweet hope entertained by American pinks that what happened to the Church in Spain may speedily happen here—American Catholics, 25,000,000 strong, do nothing whatever to avert calamity, preferring to wait and let it happen.

There is, of course, a specious alibi or two for this attitude of pusillanimity of American Catholics en masse—1: the Church will triumph in the end, and 2: let the Bishops tell us what to do and we will do it. Look what we did to the movies. Yes, the Church will triumph in the end, but meanwhile the Church is taking it on the chin from a horde of disreputable truth-perversers animated entirely by bad will. Catholic citizens are afraid to resent it. Somebody, for instance, might laugh at them!

As to Alibi 1, I presume we are to crow about our triumph over salacious movies (three years past now) until we die—like a palooka fighter who once years ago got a decision and has never ceased to boast of it, even though he never again won a round. The Bishops? It should occur to anyone who exercises his brain for, say two minutes, that the Bishops by the very delicacy of their pastoral office are usually prevented from initiating many effectual civic (as distinguished from purely religious) movements which, however, they must wish in their hearts that the laity (more free as ordinary citizens than they) would undertake. But does the laity undertake? Not on your life! Hence, while other minorities succeed in making themselves felt, members of our minority (which is not such a minority, at that) exert no influence whatever. Instead, they feel so abashed in the sophisticated presence of their atheistic betters that they stand around, suck their thumbs, and look on with blank and foolish faces at the gathering deluge.

In any event, there is for Father Toomey and other neglected voices crying in the wilderness this one gloomy consolation: Comes the revolution and American Catholics will get exactly what their torpor deserves.

Los Angeles, Calif.

FRED NIBLO, JR.

LITERATURE AND ARTS

THE FALSE START OF NEGRO FICTION

THEOPHILUS LEWIS

(Concerning his article the author writes: "This is a picture of the dark side of Negro fiction. [No pun intended.] I think that it is worth attention because it is the only distinct movement on record in Negro letters. Besides, since art is supposed to be a distillation of life, a number of books that appeared about eight or ten years ago has probably given a large part of the reading public a false impression of Negro life." We are glad that this impression is removed. EDITOR.)

TEN years ago there was a great deal of talk about a renaissance of Negro art. The Negro Renaissance, its enthusiasts called it, preferring the definite article. In a three-year period more books by colored writers, not to mention contributions to magazines, were published than during double the time before or since. It was one of the more interesting minor movements of American literature, and quite as diverting as interesting. For a while it did not appear to be a minor movement at all, for it was launched by its sponsors and greeted by its dupes with a clamor that approached the vociferousness of the revival of the Ku Klux Klan or the crusade for the Old Age Revolving Pension. It gave Negro fiction an impetus in a definite direction and doubtless exerted appreciable influence on the main course of American creative writing.

The sudden burst of activity by Negro writers was welcomed by everyone with a genuine interest in American letters. It brought a promise of fresh ideas, new sources of beauty, perhaps new forms. But thoughtful observers were disturbed by its confusion of definitions. Its satellites ignored the meaning of renaissance, which is a revival of ancient arts and skills or a new birth of national genius that has long lain fallow. As only American colored writers, and a few painters, were included in the movement, Aframerican would have been a better descriptive term than Negro. There were captious persons who remarked that a Negro renaissance that re-discovered no old art and in which only a tiny fraction of Negro artists participated did not make sense.

Only a pedant would condemn a movement because its extremists were less than precise in their choice of words. The pertinent question is what were the results of the quickened interest in colored writers? Since art is not an end in itself, it is not beside the point to ask if our artists, given the most hospitable audience they ever had, were able to reveal Negro character in its true colors, contributing something tangible to a better understanding between the races. Did they justify themselves as artists or expose themselves as opportunists?

Here it may be convenient to mention a school of white writers that became conspicuous shortly before the so-called black renaissance and flourished along with it. Led by H. L. Mencken, critic of the old *Smart Set* and *American Mercury*, numerous young writers enlisted in a revolt against Puritanism. It quickly became apparent that what many of them thought was a revolt against Puritanism was practically an assault on all discipline, especially religious and moral restraint. The fiction of the time teemed with glamorous rogues and self-deluded unfortunate women who proclaimed that they were "emancipated." Bad morals and bad manners were lauded. Earnest striving to improve one's self and one's neighbor was tagged with the opprobrious label "Puritanism."

For a man to love his wife and be faithful to her was to be a silly sentimentalist. To be proud of his morality and loyalty was to be a prig. If he loved another man's wife he immediately became a gallant and gorgeous figure, and perhaps a hero in a novel. Indeed, the popular novels of the period were little more than tracts in praise of lewdness, filled with infidelities and smelling of alcohol. Van Vechten's *Blind Bow Boy* and Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, both of which were nothing more than book-length washroom stories, may be mentioned as typical of the sort of fiction favored by the "advanced" critics. Character, the basis of all lasting literature, was ignored. Novelists competed in a wild scramble for color. The color they were looking for was simply a nice name for nothing more than debauchery.

It is not surprising that as the competition for color grew feverish, canny white writers turned to Negro life in search of the unusual and outlandish. They found plenty of what they were looking for there, and what they did not find they invented. Negro life had never been adequately presented in American fiction. The "advanced" novelists proceeded to present it grotesquely.

Carl Van Vechten got a head start on the field with his *Nigger Heaven*, which most Negroes considered insulting in title and text. DuBose Heywood followed through with *Porgy*, a throbbing tale of a black ghetto in which the most poignant scene is the old, old story of women watching the sea for ships that do not come home, done in blackface. Jim Tully took a crack at the black-belt theme in drama. His play, *Black Boy*, seemed to say that a Negro prizefighter, in his heart, would gladly exchange the heavyweight title for a chance to be a tramp harmonica player. Which is to say that Joe Louis would much prefer to be pagan than to be champion.

Pagan was a favorite word in pre-Negro renaissance days, and paganism reached its peak in Julia Peterkin's *Scarlet Sister Mary*. It was a story that made a supreme virtue of vegetation. The heroine was a wench who produced babies so casually, each begotten by a different father, that she eventually became confused and did not know, or pretended not to know, whether she was delivering babies in singles or pairs. "One of the finest novels in the last twenty years," said Heywood Brown. The book was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the year.

American fiction was presenting Negro life in false and damaging colors. It was the business of colored artists to correct the picture by idealizing the faith and struggles of the race. But budding Negro talents were quickly seduced by the fallacies of the anti-Puritan school of white artists. When it came their turn to interpret Negro life they affected the fake realism of the Van Vechtens and Peterkins. Instead of going direct to Negro life for their subjects and characters they merely re-wrote the alleged Negro characters invented by the "pagan" school of white authors. The total result of their efforts is a half dozen tedious narratives of incontinence and drifting.

The obvious truth is that most of the colored writers who leaped into the limelight were second-rate minds with less than superficial knowledge of the canons of art. One of the first things a genuine artist learns is that the backbone of strong fiction is earnest effort that ends in defeat or victory. Brummagem artists never learn it. The colored writers who made the "renaissance" had not learned it, and their ineptness got Negro fiction off to a false start.

They set up spurious standards for subsequent colored writers. Fledgling artists follow in the path of tradition. It is only natural that young colored writers should look to the body of existing Negro fiction for models of form and technique. They will find that the only distinct school or movement in Negro fiction ignored character in favor of color, discarded the normal way of life and emphasized

the abnormal. Many young writers, accepting those standards, will be retarded in development; some will be started on the road that leads to permanent failure.

Besides, art does not exist for itself alone. Its purpose is to bring beauty to the lives of common men. To know beauty is to know truth. Art is a positive moral force. The bogus art of the Negro "renaissance" did not uplift the spirit of the Negro masses. It angered and disillusioned them. I remember a night when I was leaving a theatre after the performance of a "Negro" play in company with a colored physician and his wife. "It's no use," the physician said, bitterly. "The Negro has nothing original to contribute to American art." He expressed a feeling that was common among Negroes. Artists whose business was to raise the morale of their people condemned them instead to the gloom of defeatism.

An external effect of the movement was its failure to promote a better understanding between the American races. Art is a glass held up to nature, reflecting conditions that exist in life. The fiction and drama of Restoration England, for instance, reflected the lewdness of society that is described literally in the diary of Samuel Pepys.

Art is produced by the fine minds of a people, the keen and sensitive spirits who discern the underlying unity and harmony beneath surface confusion and dissonance. They see the core of centripetal order in the midst of social chaos. They fashion lovely things out of what seems to be airy nothingness. They give us, in the words of Isaiah, beauty for ashes.

What must be the thoughts of a white reader, with neutral ideas on the race problem, concluding, say, *Jonah's Gourd Vine* or *God Sends Sunday*? He probably thinks, half-consciously: The author is colored. As an artist, presumably one of the best minds of his race, he would not paint a false picture of his people. If this story reflects the mental and moral level of Negroes there is no doubt that they are a puerile and inferior race.

Fortunately all colored novelists contemporary with the movement were not led astray by the anti-Puritans. Walter White and Jessie Fauset wrote stories that remained in contact with reality, upholding the dignity of literature and the dignity of their race. But Mr. White and Miss Fauset were derided as "propagandists." Miss Fauset, however, continues to appear in print while most of the brilliant young art-for-art's-sakers who ridiculed her work have ceased to function.

There was a growing body of respectable Negro literature before the anti-Puritan brain-storm broke loose. Additions have been made since the sky has cleared. A few good novels, more and better poetry, a formidable mass of short stories a few of which are excellent. Biography has appeared too, James Weldon Johnson's fine self-portrait ranking with the best biographical literature of our time. Here is Negro literature performing its proper function, reflecting the progress of the race, contributing its share to the enrichment of American letters. But that is another and pleasanter story.

THE CHILD

How a heart's goodness shines upon a face!
So old saints keep a child's sweet candid eyes!
But Gabriel, greeting Mary full of grace,
Saw the unfathomed depths of crystal skies.

Yet fleeting is infantile innocence:
Wrath hardens, greed that blue beclouds and blurs;
Saints but regain by bitter penitence
Some part of that pure limpid light of hers.

So John, entrusted with the sword-pierced heart,
Wondered, abashed, to see when Mary smiled,
Joyous simplicity that knows no art—
And in his mother found the eternal child.
THEODORE MAYNARD

LINEN

Lo, how the acolyte
Tiptoes, lest wax
Drip on the altar-cloth's
Consecrate flax,
The linen, the linen
Where lately has lain
Whiteness on whiteness,
And will lie again. . . .

See how in God's design,
Layette to mound,
A lifetime of linen
Laps us round.
In homes and in sacristies
Heaped on shelves
Is whiteness integral
With ourselves.
For swaddling the newly-born
Linen is pure,
For coif, amice,
Sepulture.
Linen is holy
That cradles the head
Of a mother who swathes,
In her smooth marriage bed,
Her infant in linen
And holds him high
To live in linen
Until he die—
And, dying in linen
From shoulders to feet,
To rise like Lazarus
In a winding-sheet.

ALFRED BARRETT

PRAYER ON LOOKING DOWN

Let me never get used to wearing
You, terrible thing—
Let me never get used to bearing
The pain you bring.

Let me never get over the wonder,
The stifled cry,
When I stare at a cross and under
It watch Him die

Whom I'll never get used to knowing
As all my own
Till out to the Night we'll be going
Alone.

SISTER MARY ST. VIRGINIA, B.V.M.

CERAMIC NOCTURNE

(In the Metropolitan Museum)

A peach-bloom moon blows idly by
spun clouds of egg-shell rose,
and, lucent mazarine, the sky
fluent and liquid flows.

A priestly frog in carved jade-green
on waters mirror-black
chants from a lily, blanc de chine,
while chorus echoes back

through hawthorn-darkness of the wood
his viol miracle—
Camellia-green, the solitude
accepts the oracle. . . .

MAURICE C. FIELDS

I NEVER COULD

I never could make out why God,
When He designed the gastropod,
By way of such a joke, should put
Its stomach where He put our foot.

HENRY WATTS

THE SPANISH "LOYALISTS"

There are so many noses broken
Of Our Sweet Lady's image—she whose spoken
Message as maid, made a Magnificat—
Would we not fail her to forgive them that?

Her ruined spires, her steeples bend towards Hell,
The battered belfry and the broken bell
Issue no more the clarion note of Peace,
Redemption, Revelation, and Release.

Their killing off of priests I mind not much:—
But oh, the things they touched they should not touch!
O God! O Christ! O Franco! Anyone!
Avenge us, please, for some things they have done!

LEONARD FEENEY

BOOKS

A NOVEL THAT WON THE GRAND PRIX

THE DIARY OF A COUNTRY PRIEST. By Georges Bernanos. The Macmillan Co. \$2.75

BORN in Paris in 1888, M. Georges Bernanos was educated at Vaugirard College by the Jesuits and lives at Palma in the Balearics. He won the Prix Femina in 1929 and was awarded the Grand Prix of the Académie Française for *The Diary of a Country Priest*, which has been translated into four languages and now appears in an English version by Pamela Morris. His earlier novels include *Sous le Soleil de Satan*, *L'Imposteur* and *La Joie*. The dust jacket of this new novel in the form of a diary suggests that it portrays people with a power akin to that of Balzac. Being of *Le Rénouveau Catholique*, Bernanos is rather nearer the spirit of Bazin, Bourget, Baumann, Bordeaux—in a famous preface on suffering—and, especially, the *exaspéré*, Léon Bloy.

The reading of this book, slowly, thoughtfully—without cheating in a search for plot climaxes—is an enriching experience. It is also rather harrowing. For the book is a masterpiece of art by indirection, its diary form forcing the reader to canalize his curiosity about the parishioners and to know them only through the tortures, the sympathies, the rare moments of exaltation that their lives give rise to in their *curé's* soul. Sometimes, as in the case of the stubborn adolescent, Mlle. Chantal, the reader who is versed in the ways of "realistic" fiction, will perhaps be disappointed by too little being said; as if the author—like the priest—were somehow keeping the seal.

The country priest is still young, just over thirty, when the diary ends with his death. Beset with the leprosy of boredom which infects his parish, "an aborted despair like the fermentation of a Christianity in decay," the peasant priest blames his own ineptitude. He passes through a dark night of the soul to final peace. And he brings others to peace as well. The scene where he breaks the pride of Madame la Comtesse, who, because God took away her child, had sinned wilfully against hope every day for eleven years, reveals him thrillingly as the awkward instrument of grace, never apparently saying the right thing, but penetrating to the core of self-deception with a kind of *Curé of Ars naïveté*; dining into her ears, and at length her soul, that she is heading for Hell, and "Hell is not to love any more!"

If there is little external action in the book, there is the continual drama of conflict, not only between "the counter-campéd hosts of Heaven and Hell" in the priest's soul, but between him and the other characters Bernanos creates. Besides serving as foils to educe the frail and noble qualities of the *curé*, they are personalities in their own right: the two agnostic doctors, one a suicide, the other a morphine addict; the scandal-mongering, grasping villagers; the depreciated nobility at the chateau; the idealistic soldier of the Foreign Legion, who says that the last real soldier was burned at Rouen in 1431; the "unfrocked" priest whose "intellectual evolution" has led him to cast off "hypocrisy" and to make an honest living for the "lady who shares my life."

The best of them is the robust, blunt old *Curé de Torcy*, whose simple piety is devoid of the somewhat unhealthy introspectiveness that makes the hero of the book—and he is a hero—dwell too much on his mental and physical ills. The *Curé de Torcy* redeems the book from the charge levelled against Bernanos when he wrote *Sous le Soleil de Satan*, also, curiously, a tale about the struggle for sanctity of a peasant *vicar*. It was urged that his view of Catholic life was poisoned

by a dubious mysticism and a Jansenistic obsession with the vast difficulties, almost the helplessness, of the spirit in its struggle with the flesh. Here the conflict between soul and body is presented with theological precision. It is externalized in several episodes that exhibit the sudden workings of grace; and, though the reader may be left puzzled by the necessary vagueness of the priest's almost clinical self-probing as he blames himself for the "inconceivable sterility of souls," there is always de Torcy to drop in and clear the air with one of his mellow chats on God or Our Lady, "who was preserved from the least tip-touch of the savage wing of human glory."

To this reviewer, *The Diary of a Country Priest* seems a better book than Mauriac's *Viper's Tangle*, which it much resembles. It abounds in profound observations: "The Church is on the march through time as a regiment marches through strange country, cut off from its ordinary supplies. The Church lives on successive regimes and societies, as the soldiers would from day to day on the inhabitants." It is preoccupied with the struggle for social justice that fired Bloy, and suffused with the *curé's* own yearning to bring men from the communion of sinners into the Communion of Saints. One hopes that Catholics will appreciate it, as have the secular reviewers and the *Académie Française*, for it is a model of how a novel by a Catholic can and should be written.

ALFRED BARRETT

A BIOGRAPHY OF HAWTHORNE'S DAUGHTER

SORROW BUILT A BRIDGE. By Katherine Burton. Longmans, Green and Co. \$2.50

IT IS becoming increasingly evident that modern Catholic literature is chiefly successful in the field of biography. The genius of C. C. Martindale (unfortunately neglected by most American readers), of Henri Gheon and of a great many others has definitely established the fact that the lives of good people are more interesting to the intelligent reader than are the dreary scandals of Renaissance princes and Restoration dandies. Katherine Burton joins the company of the important Catholic biographers with her excellent life of Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, who, as Mother Alphonsa, founded the Dominican congregation of The Servants for the Relief of Incurable Cancer.

Sorrow Built a Bridge not only tells the story of one of our foremost American women, but it tells it in such an artless, tender way that the reader cannot resist its continuous charm. The first part deals with the family life of the Hawthornes and contains generous characterizations of America's greatest novelist, his entirely lovable and Christian wife Sophia, his family and his wide circle of acquaintances and friends. In this sense it is a real contribution to American literary memorabilia. The interest, however, centers upon the youngest daughter Rose and we learn all we need know about the beautiful and rather haughty young lady who eventually married George Parsons Lathrop, became a writer of some distinction and moved with exquisite grace through the most intellectual circles of the day.

Mrs. Lathrop's triumph was won only after the most bitter experience. Her only child died suddenly, her marriage was a most unfortunate failure and her conversion to the Catholic Faith brought with its immense consolations a way of life which was altogether new and somewhat terrifying. Hawthorne's daughter was too great-souled to do anything by halves. The influence of her

father and of her dead sister Una as well as her own Christian love of her fellow beings convinced her that her vocation lay in helping the sick poor. As everyone is probably aware, the poor people who suffered from incurable cancer were, at the turn of the century, turned out of the hospitals to die wherever they could find space. Medical science was as yet unable to cope with the disease, which most people thought was contagious. The lepers had found their Father Damien and their Brother Joseph Dutton, but it was not until Rose Hawthorne Lathrop rented a miserable hovel in a New York slum and turned it into a clinic that the outcasts of the greatest American city found succor and relief.

When Mrs. Lathrop became Sister Alphonsa and received the habit of Saint Dominic her real work began. More and more patients flocked to her shelter. She begged, bought land and built two hospitals, managed a community and personally tended hundreds of men and women who had been abandoned even by their own families. Yet every record of her life, every memory of her companions indicates that she was triumphantly cheerful. The genius which her father put in his books was transformed by grace into a life of sublime heroism in the service of Christ. Mrs. Burton has caught the precise tone of Rose Hawthorne, and she has put her in a book which should be read by everyone who admires spiritual realism and Divine romance.

FRANCIS X. CONNOLLY

FERTILE FIELD FOR PROPAGANDA

CHRIST, COLOR AND COMMUNISM. By John T. Gillard, S.S.J., Ph.D. The Josephite Press, Baltimore, Md. Bound, 75 cents; paper, 50 cents.

COMMUNISM, says Dr. Gillard, editor of the *Colored Harvest*, in his challenging little book, is not so much "boring in" among the American Negroes as it is "permeating" them. Much has been said by comfortable-thinking people to the effect that the American Negro can never adopt Communism, being religious by nature, and averse to dry theories. But the issue is not whether or not the CPUSA succeeds in enrolling large squadrons of professed disciples. Those optimists forget that the American Negro is being gloriously used for Communism's purposes, and that Communist ideology is steadily being built up among their masses. Count the number of Negroes, in the South as well as in the North, who now assume as a commonplace that the Holy Father approved of Italy's actions in Ethiopia, and you will find your count running not into the hundreds alone, but into the hundred thousands. As Dr. Gillard observes:

The venom of anti-Italian and anti-Christian propaganda did more damage to the Church's work among the Negroes than can be measured. Apart from the fact that numerically the Italians are predominantly a Catholic people, the fact that the Roman Pontiff did not *ex cathedra* meddle in the affair was a signal for an avalanche of vitriolic attacks upon the Church from the Holy Father down to the humblest member who dared even to think that the course pursued by the Head of the Church was the only sensible one open to him. . . . Communism made much of the opportunity presented by the Italo-Ethiopian conflict to implant in the hearts of some of our colored people a bitterness towards the Church which will take many years to overcome.

The Spanish war is now past the stage of being a runner-up on Ethiopia. Milton Herndon, brother of Angelo Herndon, Negro vice-president of the League for Communist Youth, dies as a Communist martyr fighting for "Loyalist" Spain. Langston Hughes, Negro American novelist and poet, on his first day in Barcelona hails a young brown-skin from the Canary Islands, and makes enough out of the boy's Spanish dialect to learn that "he

did not like Fascism with its crushing of labor unions and the rights of working people like himself." Hughes' glowing pages make fireside reading for thousands of Negro homes in the South, while Northern Negroes are organized by Communist professionals to recover WPA jobs, picket discriminating employers, or produce any kind of mass meeting that will voice popular protest or discontent. The second annual Negro Congress welcomes to Philadelphia on October 19, 4,500 delegates from ultra-conservative ministers to the ubiquitous James W. Ford, Communist candidate for the Vice-Presidency, and his stalwarts. Such a sober scholar as President F. D. Patterson of Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, addresses the gathering, but the sober language is ignored in the cry for harangues against war and Fascism. The Communists are in the saddle, and all who shun their ideology are swept aside.

Father Gillard divides his material into three parts: "The Negro—A Victim. Communism—A Lie. Catholicism—A Solution." In his characteristic direct language he explains why Communism sees in the American Negro a fertile field for propaganda and how it is organized for this purpose; why and how it cannot fulfil its promises; and the wisdom of the Catholic point of view.

The book will doubtless greatly aid in awaking thoughtful Negroes to the danger that lies before them. It should also awaken white Catholics to the realization that the choice of Christ or Communism for the Negro is not up to the Negro alone, but is addressed in a pre-eminent manner to the white man himself, who is the dominant factor in the Negro's condition in this country today. As Father Gillard says, a "new Negro" has emerged, and the ostrich-like policy of ignoring his existence can only result in bitter disillusionment for all concerned. Catholic Action has here abundant material for meditation.

JOHN LAFARGE

BOOKS IN BRIEFER REVIEW

JEFFERSON DAVIS: THE UNREAL AND THE REAL. 2 VOLS.

By Robert McElroy. Harper and Bros. \$8

REFERENCES to this very scholarly biography of the great Confederate leader will be found on page 173 of this issue.

DOCTORS ON HORSEBACK. By James Thomas Flexner. The Viking Press. \$2.75

THE story of pioneers is usually thrilling, and to anyone of medical proclivities this book will afford many a thrill. In our modern world, where large hospital facilities are taken almost for granted, we are apt to forget the tremendous odds against which the battle for health was waged in primitive communities. While the Colonial physician was combating disease, he was riding the wilderness of a new continent. When he kept pace with the American forces at war with England, he was treating soldiers who were underfed and ill-equipped physically as well as militantly. He had to carry a gun and an axe hanging from his saddle with his medical supplies, as he went to the aid of isolated dwellers in log cabins, and his methods of treatment were supplied chiefly by his own ingenuity.

But his adventures in overcoming the difficulties experienced in helping to found a new kind of civilization were typical of his exploits in the then unexplored labyrinths of the theory and practice of medicine. To such men, a very heavy debt of gratitude is due from the present-day physicians, who in most instances are but following the trails these seldom-remembered heroes have blazed. To help to atone for such forgetfulness, and to recall the memory of inspiring lives, is the purpose of this narrative.

Incidentally there are many interesting anecdotes of the framers of our Constitution, as well as meetings with

famous and infamous people in Europe. As an instance may be cited Dr. Morgan's visit to Voltaire at Geneva. When parting, Voltaire said to the physician: "I commend you. Go on; love truth and search diligently after it. Hate hypocrisy, hate Masses, above all, hate priests." Evidently the inconsistency of the two parts of his advice escaped the philosopher.

BREAD AND CIRCUSES. By Willson Whitman. Oxford University Press. \$1.75

THE Federal Theatre has probably been criticized more than any other single relief project. Miss Whitman's story of the Federal Theatre, *Bread and Circuses*, is destined for a great deal of criticism too—first of all because her defense of it is somewhat immoderate. A lack of moderation in discussing anything in the theatrical world is nothing new, but Miss Whitman does not think in the traditional patterns. She has dared to overlook persons and organizations that are never ignored when the theatre is talked about and she has brought up topics which ordinarily are overlooked.

This as well as all other Federal projects has been criticized on the grounds that the unemployed were without ability or ambition. This criticism is frequently made, Miss Whitman says, "among persons who only by the Grace of God are employed themselves."

Another criticism is that the Federal Theatre has not developed any great playwrights or great dramatic geniuses. Obviously, this is a silly and stupid criticism for any one to make, particularly when the project is so young. Yet another is that the Federal Theatre is "radical." Miss Whitman admits that some of the productions have been "left wing" but she explains this by saying that it is the radical element who are most articulate today. She says that it is the bright young person who wants a job and cannot find one who is likely to become at once "left wing" and the writer of some sort of "left" literature.

Perhaps the most important thing that Miss Whitman does in her book is to bring out into the open the whole problem of the relation between propaganda and government. The relation of the drama to the state is, we remember, an ancient problem. In America today it is a topic which is discussed almost entirely in reference to foreign governments. Miss Whitman makes us realize that it is an important matter of immediate concern for Americans today.

ADVENTURES AMONG IMMORTALS. By Lowell Thomas. Dodd, Mead and Co. \$3

THE autobiography of one person written by another is never very satisfactory because it immediately raises a doubt about the authenticity of the book. The reader is inclined to suspect too much selection or rejection of characters and events, too little concern with objective truth, and too much interest in popular appeal. However, *Adventures Among Immortals*, even if it had been written by Percy Burton instead of told to Lowell Thomas, who actually did the writing, would still not be an autobiography in the strict sense of the word. For, it is primarily a series of random memoirs of the theatre, some interesting and some quite dull! Some having the air of truth, and many reeking of legend.

Henry Irving, Ellen Terry, Bernard Shaw, Forbes-Robertson and many other famous and glamorous theatre-personalities of the last fifty years pass through its pages, but rarely do they stand out from the journalistic sketches of their lives. For each of them, Mr. Thomas has used the same mold, and since some of them refuse to fit into this mold, the results are sometimes incongruous.

If these were stories of ordinary people, instead of noted men who have been well publicized, they would be completely dull and flat and lifeless. But the magic of such names as James M. Barrie, Eleonora Duse and Sarah Bernhardt give occasional warmth and glow to what, under other circumstances, would be ordinary publicity stories written by the press-agent of a forthcoming play.

THEATRE

AMPHITRYON 38. Most of us are rather rusty about our old Greek comedies. It is just as well—or rather it is much better—that we should be. We are losing little if anything, and we are escaping the brazen and ear-splitting clangor of the mighty Greek hammer, beating on one sex note and only one till our ear-drums nearly split and our stomachs nearly turn over. We may also miss some wit and more or less philosophy; but even these pound on the same note; for the Greeks' favorite instrument of life had only that note.

If I had been asked a few weeks ago who or what Amphitryon was I should have answered vaguely that it was something Greek. Whether it was a Greek hero or a Greek pickle I should not have been quite sure, though my memory moved foggily toward the figures of a Greek hero and his chaste wife. The 38 meant nothing to me at all, till I learned from Helen Deutsch, who herself had to look up the matter, that we are seeing in New York this season, in the Theatre Guild's production at the Shubert Theatre, the thirty-eighth version of one old Greek myth that has come down to us through the centuries.

That, then, is a starting point. For the rest a Greek warrior, Amphitryon, a General, as it develops, has a wife, Alkmene, so devoted and so chaste that she is faithful to her husband and, despite the laxity of the times, is determined to remain so. Not even Jupiter himself could shake this resolution when he fell in love with her and came to woo her. So he disguised himself as her husband, whom he had previously sent off to a little war.

She did not discover the fraud. Jupiter realized that if she did so, she would kill herself, and he kept the knowledge from her. When he appeared later in his own person, complete with white whiskers, curls and phosphorescent eyes, she talked to him of platonic friendship, which did not appeal to him at all. He finally accepted it, however, and departed on a pink cloud, leaving the married lovers to live their life in peace forever after.

A harmless little tale that would seem, though far from worthy of so long a survival. But the whole story becomes different when Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne are talking about it up at the Shubert Theatre. What they say has been put into their mouths by Jean Giraudoux, a French playwright, and his adapter, S. N. Behrman, American. That is where the wearying hammer strokes on the one note begin, and go on and on and on for three hours. That note is struck with the fervor and the maddening persistence of a child beating a drum, and there are few normal ears in the theatre that are not wearied by it, and few normal stomachs that are not more or less nauseated.

The production, of course, is magnificent. Lee Simonson has done nothing finer in his career than his exquisite Greek settings for the old comedy. Mr. Lunt as Jupiter and Miss Fontanne as the chaste wife are doing some inspired acting on the rare occasions when a chance is given them to act. Nine-tenths of the time they are merely discussing sex. The direction by Bretnaigne Windust is admirable, and Samuel Barlow's music is agreeable and fitting to the period. But by the end of the play the audience is very tired of that blatant and incessantly hammered sex note. Most of the spectators emerging from the theatre looked to me as if they were carrying out into Broadway with them one firm and lasting conviction. *Amphitryon* never deserved all those thirty-eight productions.

Mr. Giraudoux told Helen Deutsch that his play is a "conversation piece." Mr. Lunt assures the public that it is "a gentle, philosophic comedy." Take your choice—but Mr. Giraudoux is right!

ELIZABETH JORDAN

FILMS

STAND-IN. Clarence Buddington Kelland's story of the humanization of an adding machine in the balmy atmosphere of the Hollywood studios makes capital entertainment under the indulgent hand of Tay Garnett. This is a film about the films but Mr. Garnett has permitted some fun, albeit the most good-natured, to be poked at certain of the industry's types. The comedy which results is frank and refreshing, mixed with equal parts of sentiment and melodrama. An excessively dignified banker ventures into Hollywood's gilded routine in order to investigate a failing picture company. Falling under the tutelage of a "stand-in" player, he learns the business from the minor heartbreaks of the supernumeraries up to the colossal failures of the front office, but a little common sense avails more than all his statistics as he outwits the villains who would jettison art and puts the company on a paying basis. Leslie Howard's old deftness at light roles is unimpaired and much of the fun stems directly from his caricature of the man of cold figures. Joan Blondell, as a bright and brittle extra, and Humphrey Bogart add excellent portrayals of their own. The film is good family amusement. (*United Artists*)

HURRICANE. This startling film falls into the super-special category by virtue of its terrific climax, in which a sizable South Sea island is all but tossed into the audience's collective lap. Based on the Nordhoff-Hall story, it relates the sad experiences of a Polynesian lad broken in the clash between a state of nature and civilization's complex code. Unjustly imprisoned after a café fight, the native sailor aggravates his plight by attempting periodic escapes. The stern white governor refuses to temper justice with understanding until the violence of nature alters his outlook on life. The hurricane which has been manufactured for this picture is one of the most amazing technical effects yet produced on the screen and, for sheer excitement, deserves to be seen as a separate feature. Nature aside, however, the picture is just another exposition on the Noble Savage which will appeal to you in proportion to your naïveté, or your primitivist convictions. Jon Hall, Dorothy Lamour, Raymond Massey, C. Aubrey Smith and Thomas Mitchell are more or less effective in the cast. The hurricane, without capitalization, is recommended to adults who can discount director John Ford's few suggestive hints of nature in the raw as well as rampant. (*United Artists*)

THE BARRIER. This rugged drama from the pen of Rex Beach is about to make the rounds once again, refurbished with new checkered shirts under which, however, beat the same generous hearts of the gold rush. In spite of the contemporary look of the cast, the film breathes the heavy romance of the museum and is not likely to impress anyone old enough to remember its past. The belle of the mining town still believes that she is barred from the affections of the brave army officer by half-Indian parentage but when her rascally father turns up among the gold rush gamblers, truth prevails and the barrier is down. A capable cast does its best to make the old plot last out another film cycle and Leo Carillo almost succeeds. Jean Parker, Otto Kruger, Robert Barrat and James Ellison are well cast in this family attraction. (*Paramount*)

52ND STREET. There is not a great deal to be said about this musical extravaganza except that it mingles vaudeville entertainment with a more or less comprehensible story about high society in the theatre. Ian Hunter, Leo Carillo, Pat Patterson and Kenny Baker are cast in the usual didoes for thoughtless adults. (*United Artists*)

THOMAS J. FITZMORRIS

EVENTS

EFFORTS to branch out in entirely new directions were discerned. . . . In the West the first attempt in history to build up a list of prospective suicides was launched. The idea is to circularize the prospects, ask them to consider some form of activity other than suicide. . . . A new probe into the effects of false fire alarms on modern life is of first importance, false-alarm students revealed. Bursts of false alarms continued. A former Pittsburgh fireman turned one in, paid twenty-five dollars fine to a judge as his ex-buddies tore along to an imaginary conflagration. . . . In the East, a fire chief who is paid on the basis of the number of alarms he answers upped his wages by increasing the alarms. . . . In New York a Chinese, attempting to post a letter in a fire-alarm box, roused a lot of firemen out of bed, caused screaming fire trucks to zip along the streets. . . . An educational campaign to induce people to stop turning in false alarms was suggested. . . . The problem created by persons who first set buildings on fire and then turn in alarms should also be studied, it was said. A New York hotel servant, about to be discharged, thought he might be able to retain his job if he were the one to discover a fire in the hotel. As there was no fire to discover, he started one, discovered it, turned in the alarm. Planning on a small blaze, he got instead a big one, caused enormous inconvenience to the guests and management. He will be given employment in one of the State penitentiaries, it was thought. . . . Matrimonial disharmony evoked perturbation among social students. . . . In California a ninety-two-year-old husband sought divorce, complained his seventy-two-year-old wife would not work. He asked reasonable alimony, praised his first two wives as workers. . . . A Danish author and lecturer urged enactment of a new tax to aid children of broken marriages. . . . A tax to finance divorced parents in new marriages was advocated by an Eastern bigwig. Economic conditions often prevent people from marrying more than two or three times, he said. . . . No matter how hard wrestlers work they cannot be workers, the Internal Revenue Bureau decided, barring them from social security. . . .

Another new social trend was that in which prospective corpses strive to become better acquainted with their pall-bearers. . . . A New Jersey woman gave a party to six men and six women who have been invited to act as her pall bearers. The pall bearers brought her flowers, danced with each other as she looked on, dressed in heavy black. . . . The great variety of things which cause laughter was illustrated. A hunter in New York laughed merrily when he was shot in the left leg. The left leg is made of cork. The hunter admitted that a shot in the other leg would not provoke laughter. . . . The custom of bequeathing wooden legs continued. In New Mexico a dead man's estate owed a lumber dealer for the wood in one leg. The dealer was bequeathed the leg, thus increasing his supply of lumber. . . . An earnest effort to make prisoners stop biting the fingers off chiefs of police was forecast. An Illinois chief was recently bit, lost part of a finger. . . . Historical research went on. Excavations revealed that the army of Alexander the Great ate bananas. Other important discoveries were also reported. . . .

Snobbishness frequently takes queer twists. Two men on the subway were sneering at the names of the Fordham football team. "That's why I don't like them," said one. "Look at the names, Wojciechowicz, Franco, Barbatsky, etc." If these names were on a musical program, the snobs would like them. Snobs rave over names like Stokowski, Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Shostakovich, Stravinsky, but they do not like Wojciechowicz, Franco, Barbatsky. Maybe Fordham has been winning too many games.

THE PARADER.